

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)

College of Liberal Arts

Department of Political Science

4505 Maryland Parkway – Box 455029

Las Vegas, NV 89154-5029

SYLLABUS

Introduction to American Politics (PSC 101) - 4 credits, Spring 2008

Instructor: Martin Dean Dupalo

Class Meeting Place & Times: Section(s): 001 – C 148, **Saturdays 8:30-12:00 pm**

Office hours: Sat 12:00-1:30 pm and by appointment in adjunct office Wright Hall (WRI) A221

Instructor E-mail: Dean.Dupalo@unlv.edu

Department Contacts/FAX 895-5246/895-1065 Office 895-5245

Course Goals

Introduction to American Politics is a survey course of the United States political, social, economic, diplomatic and cultural development from the inception of the United States to contemporary times. My goal is to develop your *interest* and *understanding* of political science and how it relates to you, your family, and your community, both past and present. Political science is a never-ending novel that does not end and is inclusive of everyone, every thing and every event, however, we can only survey the more significant events and people at this time.

Coursework in political science will increase your ability to think critically and independently, enhance your ability to communicate in more discussions, enhance your ability to think through competing theories, and information using logical and analytical means, knowledgeable of the discipline and major trends, debates, theories, methods and serving as a foundation for fields such as government service and practicing law.

Course Texts

The **required** texts are the current editions of 1) ***Government by the People*** (Brief 7th ed.) by Burns/Peltason/Cronin/Magleby/O'Brien & Light by Pearson Prentice Hall Publishers, 2008 and 2) the ***Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics*** (3rd ed.) by Michael W. Bowers by the University of Nevada Press, 2006. All students are responsible for having these texts available to them before the second class. I will use several materials to supplement your understanding of the subject matter including additional texts, clippings, acetates, Internet and multimedia.

Expectations

I expect full participation from every student each class. As a college student, it is your responsibility to read the assigned material **before class** (which is noted as part of your participation grade), complete the assignments on time, and participate within guidelines. All assignments are due the day listed on the schedule. **All assignments must be accomplished professionally**, i.e. a product of consideration and thought, collegial work standards, no colored, crumpled paper, additional artwork, etc. I understand that over the course of a semester, there are many factors that may influence your participation. If you believe your participation/academic work may be affected, please consult with me beforehand.

Political science courses are naturally heavy reading courses and require baseline knowledge provided by the reading assignments and constant attention to current events before a competent discourse can be held. I strongly encourage each of you to read the chapters as assigned and watch and/or read the news daily. This course relies heavily on discussion derived from current events and assigned reading and related ideas and materials. *If you do not intend to read as assigned and to participate in group discussions, consider selecting another course section.*

Library and Internet usage are strongly suggested. Free Internet access is available to all students at UNLV. Please see me for further information if needed.

Like other disciplines, political science, which is a combination of government, politics, economics, culture and much more, often demonstrates both the good and the bad in a shared history of the US. Serious and open discussions in this academic setting are strongly encouraged. However, I do not want or encourage unnecessary offensive or rude behavior.

Methods of Instruction

I will utilize all the methods of instruction including lecture, discussion, guest lecturers, individual and group efforts, additional readings, et al, including service learning where appropriate.

On occasion, I will need assistance from students to gather, distribute, mark coordinate or other, class-related materials. I would appreciate your assistance in these matters.

Attendance

Attendance and order are key to learning. There are approximately 16 days of class including exams and the first day. Four absences will lower the final grade by one full grade. For example, an 'A-' will become a 'B-' *after all other grades have been determined*. Additional credit is not factored into absences. At six absences, the grade will be lowered by an additional full grade. Eight absences or more will result in receiving an 'F' grade. *There is no administrative drop available*. Please do not be late. If you are late, please enter and prepare quietly. If there is a guest speaker, please be courteous. If I am 30 or more minutes late according to solely my watch, students may depart without concern. Attendance is taken at the beginning 30 minutes of the class and partial attendance does not fully count towards attendance.

A sign in/sign out sheet must be initialed each class during the first 30 minutes according to my watch and at the end of the class. Missing either the sign in or sign out constitutes a full absence. It is your responsibility to sign properly and only for yourself.

Any students missing assignments due to observance of a religious holiday may make-up missed work if the student notifies me one week after the last day of official registration, of any anticipated absences. Making up assignments does not constitute making up or erasing an absence under any circumstances.

Grading

Grading is based on the following breakdown:

Test #1 (25%) March 1 – to be graded, returned with exam, and reviewed following week (next meeting).

Test #2 (25%) April 5 – to be graded, returned with exam, and reviewed following week (next meeting).

Test #3 (25%) Ma 17 – Scantron portion to be graded at end of class, returned with exam; essay portion to be graded and made available within the week for student pickup.

Pop Quiz(es) (15%) – to be graded same day and returned.

Attendance (10%) – to be assigned (graded) and known to students the week before the final, May 5, class #15.

Following the guidance from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts (FERPA), Social Security numbers will not be used for posting grades or attendance. If needed, random numbers will be assigned or requested. Early grades will not be e-mailed or mailed.

Poor handwriting, illegible marks and grammatically incorrect submissions will either not be accepted or have the grade lowered substantially.

The University Libraries offer free, brief clinics and workshops to help you increase your research skills and save time searching. Bring your topic to a Research Clinic for in-depth, one-on-one consultation with a research expert, or attend one of the more structured workshops on topics such as finding books and articles, successful search strategies, or Internet research. Check out the schedule at www.library.unlv.edu/inst/events.html or call 895-2123 for more information.

Exam make-ups must be accomplished before the assigned date. Make-up exams will be different but of the same degree of difficulty. No exam may be copied or taken from the classroom without permission. Please do not arrive late for scheduled tests. Students will only have the scheduled class time to complete the test. No extensions of time will be granted.

Grading will be standard: A 97-100, A 94-96, A- 90-93; B+ 87-89, B 84-86, B- 80-83; C+ 77-79, C 74-76, C- 70-73; D+ 67-69, D 64-66, D- 60-63; and 59 and below, F. Please consult the schedule to determine the last date to drop. If provided, additional credit assignments will generally be worth 20 points apiece. I *may* offer a few opportunities during the course of the semester depending on several factors (*Hint: low achievement in class is not one of them.*)

All papers, tests and graded materials handed in as scheduled will optimally be returned within 1 week of submission.

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, the University encourages you to visit its copyright website at <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright>.

Disabilities

The UNLV Disability Resource Center (DRC) houses the resources for students with 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. Their numbers are VOICE 895-0866 / TDD 895-0652 / FAX 895-0651. For additional information, please visit <http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/drc>

Advising

All undergraduate advising is accomplished through the Wilson Advising Center. Call (702) 895-1997 for further instructions or visit the main UNLV website.

Student Computing

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the preceding student resources as per UNLV policy. While most recent students are familiar with computer related matters from orientations, others have not and should seek assistance from Student Computing Services and various open labs at UNLV. The nearest lab to our course is open Saturdays and located in CBC on the first floor. **All students have a UNLV e-mail account (Pioneer Webmail) once matriculated (registered) and must know how to utilize it.** (You will need to activate your UNLV e-mail account in order to utilize WebCampus). Contact Student Computing Services either directly or through the main UNLV number (702) 895-3011. Students are fully responsible for all e-mail messages sent to their official e-mail address provided by UNLV. A WebCampus course is automatically generated for each student enrolled in a course and they may be accessed at all times by the student. Access WebCampus as needed via the UNLV homepage and current student link.

Electronics

Due to the increase of electronic interruptions, e.g. ring tones, texting, inattentiveness to lecture material, **disruptive actions** to fellow classmates, policies forbidding unapproved recording, both audio and visual, without specific instructor approval, **Internet-related plagiarism**, Internet perusing, and similar instances, classroom use of all of the aforementioned is disallowed unless specifically allowed by the instructor. Failure to explicitly follow these instructions may result in an administrative drop by the instructor and/or department.

I suggest phones be set on vibrate mode and that laptops be used solely for note-taking during class unless otherwise requested and approved.

Academic Misconduct

“Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.”

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism: “Using the words or ideas of another, from the internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources.” See the “Student Academic Misconduct Policy” (approved December 9, 2005, located at <<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>>).

Classroom Policies / Rules (As per University Policy Directive)

It is a faculty member's discretion and prerogative to determine what is and is not acceptable behavior in his or her classroom (i.e., late arrival, wearing hats). Also, classroom occupants are at the discretion of the instructor (per UNLV General Counsel). If faculty do not wish to permit students to bring their children to class, they may want to note it on their syllabus. Although there is no policy prohibiting bringing children to class, it falls within the Student Conduct Code, Section Two, III.K. and L. relating to “disrupting” the classroom and/or university operations. See <<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/student.html>>.

Schedule of Class, Lectures, Exams & Assigned Readings (I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time.)

Note: All assigned chapters must be read before the scheduled class except for the first meeting.

Jan 22 Semester begins (Monday)

Jan 26 (Class #1) Introduction/Review of Expectations/Syllabus

Chap 1 Government by the People – Constitutional Democracy & US Constitution
Nevada Constitution (Sagebrush State Appendix)

Feb 2 (Class #2) Chap 2 Government by the People – American Federalism
Chap 1 & 2 Sagebrush State

Feb 9 (Class #3) Chap 3 Government by the People – Political Culture & Ideology

Feb 16 (Class #4) Chap 4 Government by the People – American Political Landscape
Chap 5 Sagebrush State

Feb 23 (Class #5) Chap 5 Government by the People – Political Parties & Interest Groups
Chap 4 Sagebrush State

Mar 1 (Class #6) **EXAM #1**

Chap 6 Government by the People – Public Opinion, Voting and Elections

Mar 8 (Class #7) Chap 7 Government by the People – The Media and American Politics

Mar 15 (Class #8) Chap 8 Government by the People – Congress
Chap 6 Sagebrush State

Mar 16 Spring Break Starts – Note: This officially begins Sunday

Mar 29 (Class #9) Chap 9 Government by the People – The Presidency
Chap 7 Sagebrush State

Apr 5 (Class #10) Chap 10 Government by the People – Federal Administrative System
EXAM #2

Apr 12 (Class #11) Chap 11 Government by the People – The Judiciary
Chap 8 Sagebrush State

Apr 19 (Class #12) Chap 12 Government by the People – First Amendment Freedom
Chap 3 Sagebrush State

Apr 26 (Class #13) Chap 13 Government by the People – Equal Justice Under Law

May 3 (Class #14) Chap 14 Government by the People – Making Economic, Regulatory and Social Policy
Chap 10 Sagebrush State

May 10 (Class #15) Chap 15 Government by the People – Making Foreign and Defense Policy
Chap 11 Sagebrush State
Review

May 17 (Class #16) **EXAM #3 - Final** (Scheduled in accordance w/ final exam master schedule)