

PSC 101, Section 12
Introduction to American Politics - Spring 2006
5:00-6:45 PM, Tuesdays & Thursdays
WRI, C239

Instructor: Melanie Young

Office: Wright Hall A221. **Office Hours:** 4:00-5:00 PM, TR; & by appointment.

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Course

This course offers an overview of the activities and institutions of American government. The objective of this course is to increase your understanding of the foundations, organization, and functions of the national and Nevada governments. In so doing, we will study the main processes of decision-making, the administration of those decisions, and their importance to individual Americans.

PSC 101 satisfies both the U.S. and Nevada Constitutions requirement for non-PSC majors. 4 credits.

Grading

There will be 3 exams throughout the semester (including the final). The exams will be a combination of multiple choice questions, true/false statements, and short essays. Exams will cover readings, lectures, videos, and any additional handouts/readings. The final exam is not comprehensive. **Each exam is worth 1/3 (33.33%) of your final grade for the course. Each exam will consist of the following: 40 multiple choice and/or true false statements worth 2 points each (80 points total) and 2 short essays valued at 10 points each (20 points total). No make-ups will be given unless a legitimate excuse and adequate documentation are provided prior to the examination that will be missed. In other words, plan on showing up for exams. All make-up exams will be given during the last regularly scheduled day of class, Thursday, May 4. Students must provide their own scantrons and blue books for exams.**

While student participation is not formally calculated into your final grade, students may improve their final score by ½ a letter grade (e.g., B+ to A- or A- to A) if the quality and quantity of their participation merits it.

Required and optional Materials for the Course

Required texts: Patterson, Thomas E. *We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics*, 6th edition. 2006. Text.
 Bowers, Michael. *The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics*, 2nd edition. 2002. Text.

You will be responsible for any videos, handouts, or reserve readings assigned throughout the semester.

Disability Resource Center

If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the LES for coordination in your academic accommodations. Disability Service is located within the Learning Enhancement Service (LES), in the Reynolds Student Services Complex, Room 137. The phone number is 702-895-0866 or TTD 702-895-0652.

Academic Dishonesty

Neither cheating nor plagiarism will be tolerated. Please review the University handbook for penalties.

Religious Holidays and Absences

If you miss a class or exam because of a religious holiday that you observe, you will have the opportunity to make up the missed work. You must notify the instructor at least 2 weeks prior to the examination.

Official Extracurricular Activity

If the date of any of the examinations conflicts with an official extracurricular activity, notify the instructor at least 2 weeks prior to the examination and provide official written notification no less than 1 week prior to the examination.

Tentative Schedule

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Topics & Holidays</u>
January 16	Patterson, Chapter 1	Introduction & Foundations of American Democracy: Concepts & History
January 23	Patterson, Chapters 2 & 3	Constitutional Democracy & Federalism
January 30	Patterson, Chapters 3 & 4	Federalism & Civil Liberties
February 6	Patterson, Chapters 4 & 5; Bowers, Chapter 3	Civil Liberties & Equal Rights
February 13	<i>Exam 1</i>	
February 20	Patterson, Chapter 6	Public Opinion & Political Socialization
February 27	Patterson, Chapters 7 & 8	Voting & Participation
March 6	Patterson, Chapters 8 & 9; Bowers, Chapter 4	Political Parties, Candidates & Campaigns; Interest Group Politics
March 13	None	<i>Spring Break recess</i>
March 20	Patterson, Chapters 9 & 10	Interest Group Politics & News Media
March 27	<i>Exam 2</i>	
April 3	Patterson, Chapter 11; Bowers, Chapter 6	Structure, organization, & policymaking of Congress & the Nevada legislature
April 10	Patterson, Chapters 12; Bowers, Chapter 7	Presidential election and office & the Nevada executive
April 17	Patterson, Chapter 13	The Bureaucracy
April 24	Patterson, Chapter 14; Bowers, Chapter 8	The Judiciary
May 1	Bowers, Chapters 9 & 10	Local Government; State & local Finance; Make-up exams

Exams: Exams will be given on:

February 16 and March 30.

Final Exam is Thursday, May 11 at 6:00 PM.

All make-up exams will be administered on May 4, during the last day of regularly scheduled class.