

Political Science 101
Introduction to American Government
Summer 2008

Professor John Tuman
e-mail: john.tuman@unlv.edu
Wright Hall A212, Phone: 895-3754
Office Hours: M-W 1:30-2:30PM

This course is an introduction to American government and politics. The course is intended to provide students with a basic understanding of the U.S. and Nevada constitutions, political institutions, political ideologies, participation, and civil rights and liberties. We will also discuss selected public policy issues and analyze political processes in the U.S. and in Nevada.

Requirements, Grading, and Other Policies

Lecture and Discussion: The class will meet Monday through Friday for lectures and discussion. Students are expected to finish all of the assigned readings and to be prepared for discussion.

Exams and Grades: There will be two exams: a mid-term exam (June 24) and a final exam (July 11). The exams will consist of short-answer and essay questions. The mid-term exam counts for 45% of your final grade; the final exam counts for 50%, with the remaining 5% from participation.

Make-up exams will be given only if the student can demonstrate she/he was absent due to illness or participation in an official university function. Students must provide an excuse in writing from a licensed health care provider or from a university administrator.

University Policy for Students with Disabilities: Any student who, because of a disabling condition, may require some special arrangements to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. Students should present appropriate verification from the Disability Resource Center (Room 137, Reynolds Student Services Center; 895-0866 [TDD 895-0652]).

Observance of Religious Holidays: Students who miss class due to observance of a religious holiday shall be given the opportunity to make up the missed work. Please notify the instructor no later than July 9 if you will miss class because of observance of a religious holiday.

Contact via E-mail: A new UNLV policy requires students to use Rebelmail accounts when they contact faculty via e-mail. As the official e-mail system for students, Rebelmail is available to all students who have been admitted to the university. Non-matriculated students should contact the Office of Information Technology at UNLV students for assistance .

Course Texts

Required: Janda, Kenneth, Jeffrey M. Berry, and Jerry Goldman, The Challenge of Democracy: Government in America (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008).

While not required, there are some suggested readings from: Michael Bowers The Sagebrush State (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006). Third Edition.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Week 1: 6/9-6/13

Ideology and political values in the U.S.

Janda, Ch. 1

Theories of American politics

Janda, Ch. 2

The Constitution: key provisions; comparisons between Nevada /U.S. Constitutions

Janda, Ch. 3, and pp. A3 -A12.

Nevada Constitution: available at, <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Const/NVConst.html>

Suggested: Michael Bowers, The Sagebrush State Ch. 3.

Week 2: 6/16-6/20

Constitution--conclusion

The U.S. Congress & the Legislative Process; comparisons to Nevada

Janda, Ch. 11

Suggested: Bowers, Ch. 6

Suggested: Web readings on Nevada legislative session (TBA in class)

The Executive Branch; comparisons to Nevada

Janda, Ch. 12

Review

Week 3: 6/23-6/27.

June 24: Midterm Exam

Bureaucracy: Functions; Reforming Public Service; Comparisons with Nevada agencies

Janda, Ch. 13

The Judiciary. Structure and function. Politics of the judicial branch; Comparisons to Nevada

Janda, Ch. 14

Suggested: Bowers, Ch. 8

Week 4: 6/30-7/4

Judiciary--conclusion

Political participation: Protest, social movements, voting.

Janda, Chs. 7, 16.

Suggested: Bowers, Ch. 3

Public policy making—case studies

Janda, Ch. 18, 19.

Note: No class on July 4 (Holiday)

Week 5: 7/7-7/11

Public policy making-case studies-continued

Janda, Ch. 19.

Review

July 11, Final Exam