



Truckee Meadows Community College
Department of Business, History & Political Science
BUSINESS DIVISION

POLITICAL SCIENCE 101

2nd Summer Session 2017

Web-based Class

PSC 101 • INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN POLITICS (03.0 credits)

A survey of American national, state and local governments. Includes Nevada's constitution, government, and contemporary issues. Fulfills US and Nevada Constitution requirements.

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TECHNICAL SUPPORT CENTER FOR WEBCOLLEGE STUDENTS

If you need any technical assistance related to the Canvas LMS, please visit our online student support center:

<http://www.tmcc.edu/students/support/>

At the support center, you will find solutions to common problems. If you have forgotten your username or password, you can use the "login assistance" on the MyTMCC login page. If you cannot solve the problem yourself, you can contact the Tech Support Center at (775) 674-7576. The Center is open 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. I am certainly here to help you troubleshoot any problem as well. If you experience problems and cannot get the assistance you need (examples: late-night or weekend) – NO WORRIES – we will work things out.

MINIMUM STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR COURSE

- ✓ READ THIS COURSE SYLLABUS IN ITS ENTIRETY – ENSURE THAT YOU KNOW OF ALL COURSE REQUIREMENTS – CONTACT ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS
- ✓ STUDENTS MUST COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED ON THE STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT (YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN NOTIFIED VIA STUDENT EMAIL AND WERE PROVIDED A LINK). IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY REVIEWED THIS DOCUMENT, DO SO IMMEDIATELY AT WWW.TMCC.EDU/WEBCOLLEGE - CHECK UNDER DOCUMENTS & FORMS.
- ✓ IT IS ASSUMED THAT YOU HAVE THE COMPUTER SKILLS, STUDY SKILLS AND MATURITY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN A WEB-BASED CLASS
- ✓ THIS IS NOT A SELF-PACED CLASS. YOU ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CLASS EACH WEEK AND TO COMPLY WITH ANY/ALL CLASS DEADLINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS
- ✓ CHECK INTO THE CLASS FREQUENTLY FOR ANY CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND TO COMPLETE COURSEWORK EACH WEEK BY THE POSTED DEADLINE
- ✓ COMPLETE ALL ASSOCIATED WORK FOR THE CLASS:
 - EACH WEEK – READ THE ASSIGNED TEXT CHAPTERS AND REVIEW ANY RELATED ONLINE CLASS CONTENT
 - COMPLETE THE ASSIGNED CHAPTER QUIZZES FOR THE WEEK
 - COMPLETE THE NEVADA EXAM
 - PARTICIPATE IN THE COURSE DISCUSSION EACH WEEK AND POST – AT A MINIMUM – TWO COMMENTS EACH WEEK (ONE PARAGRAPH IN LENGTH – CAN POST A NEW COMMENT AND/OR RESPOND TO ANOTHER POSTING)

I WANT YOU TO SUCCEED

Let's face it – you likely are not too enthusiastic about taking this course. You are here because the course – specifically the US and Nevada Constitutions – fulfills a requirement for your major/degree. It is my sincere hope that you will be pleasantly surprised this term and will quickly come to understand how important politics is to your life.

Course expectations: stay up with the recommended pace for the course AND be sure to let me know if you have any questions or problems. The course is designed to be flexible BUT to also keep you on track for successful completion. It is your responsibility to be aware of any/all course expectations and to submit assignments by any posted deadlines.

Some advice: if you are having problems, let me know EARLY. It can make a big difference. Often, a student will wait until the last week of the course to contact me. There is not much I can do by then.

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE NOT DOING WELL IN THE CLASS, PLEASE DO NOT DROP THE COURSE WITHOUT FIRST TALKING TO ME. Together, we can explore options to get you to the finish line and successfully complete the course.

THE COURSE

Textbook: an Open Educational Resource (OER) text is provided – FREE – and embedded in the course modules for each week’s topics in an e-book format. The book is basic but provides the background and explanation you need to be successful.

Course Objectives/Outcomes

This course will survey the Constitutions of the United States and Nevada with additional attention to principles and current problems of government. The coursework and activities are designed to support the objectives and outcomes identified below:

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to critically analyze the structure and processes of American and Nevadan government. In particular, students should be familiar with and be able to analyze the constitutions of both systems, the political structures and processes established by each constitution, and the current principles and problems of state and national government.
2. Students will be able to competently read and write about contemporary issues of local and national governance.
3. Student understanding of politics should include the knowledge of citizenship duties and the importance of effective involvement in politics. Specifically, students should develop the skills and attitudes necessary to function effectively as responsible, ethical and contributing citizens of the community, state and nation.

Outcomes:

1. ability to reference and apply basic knowledge regarding the U.S. and Nevada Constitutions, political institutions and practices
2. improved critical thinking skills – the ability to analyze
4. familiarity with Internet-based resources and improved Internet-based skill levels – especially of Internet-based research skills
5. refinement of writing skills
6. improved computer literacy

Grading/Examinations:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| - 12 Chapter Quizzes (13 points each) | 156 points |
| - Nevada Exam | 50 points |
| - Critical Thinking Writing Assignment | 100 points |
| - Discussion Forum postings (<u>two each week</u>) | 100 points |
| Worth 10 points each | |

406 Points Possible

Final Grade Scale (based on 10% scale):

THE COURSE GRADE IS BASED ON TOTAL POINTS EARNED (DO NOT RELY ON THE PERCENTAGES LISTED IN THE CANVAS GRADEBOOK – THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY ACCURATE)

366-406 = A

326-366 = B

286-326 = C

246-286 = D

246/below = F

Quiz/Exam Specifics:

- ✓ All quizzes/tests will be conducted online (no requirement to come to campus)
- ✓ Quizzes will be comprised of a mix of objective questions
- ✓ The 12 quizzes are based on the textbook chapters; there will be ONE chance to take each chapter quiz
- ✓ The Nevada exam is based on content posted in the online class. You will have ONE chance to take the Nevada exam

GRADED COURSE ACTIVITY: Weekly Discussions: Worth 20 points each/100 points total

All of us are expected to participate in the weekly online discussion each week. The discussion will help us to explore contemporary issues and to better understand the concepts we are introduced to each week from the chapter readings. **EACH DISCUSSION OPENS AT 12:01 A.M. EACH MONDAY AND CLOSSES AT 11:59 PM EACH SUNDAY. PLEASE PARTICIPATE EARLY AND THROUGHOUT THE WEEK. POSTINGS ON SUNDAY NIGHT/ESPECIALLY LATE/ ARE NOT ABLE TO BE READ BY OTHERS.**

How it will work:

1. I will introduce each week's new topic - you will find the link to each weekly discussion under the appropriate module for that week
2. Each week's new topic will be posted early on Monday morning - you will have until Sunday at 11:59 pm to respond. I strongly encourage you to post earlier than Sunday night if at all possible. I have been teaching online since 1999 and I know from experience that the discussion for that week is actually winding down by then. Our hope is to have an exchange of ideas and opinions (e.g. lively discussion) so please post in sooner in the week as opposed to later - again if possible based on your schedule
3. You must post in twice a week - and your posting must be germane to that week's topic and a paragraph (at least 3 sentences). You of course can submit longer posts but it will be this type of posting that will generate your 10 x 2 (20) points each week. **YOU ARE WELCOME TO POST MORE OFTEN BUT I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU CREDIT FOR TWO POSTINGS EACH WEEK.**
4. The discussion for that week will close at 11:59 pm on Sunday. I will do my best to grade promptly and you will be notified when I do grade. I do read every posting and will make comments as appropriate. I do not judge your opinion - I do expect us all to be respectful of all opinions and to offer up a civil and informed discussion each week.

5. The purpose of this activity is to build your confidence about your understanding of politics and your ability to both frame and express your opinions. Relax, learn and have some fun along the way. I will not try to dominate or interfere with each weekly discussion - I see it as your discussion and I appreciate your taking the lead. I will correct any inaccuracies and RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DELETE ANY POSTING - much as I would regulate a discussion in a face-to-face class. It is my responsibility to keep the conversation moving - in the topical direction for that week. I appreciate both your support and understanding for this

6. Grading criteria for each discussion posting:

- Germaine to the week's topic
- At least 3 sentences
- Respectful
- Referencing a relevant website/article a plus – we are here to help each other AND learn from each other

GRADED COURSE ACTIVITY: Writing Assignment: Worth 100 points

I have selected three articles to choose from (choose only one) for the basis of your writing assignment. Links to the articles are listed below and are also provided as hyperlinks in the Writing Assignment Dropbox (found under the Writing Assignment Module)

Paper Requirements:

- **PAPER TOPIC:** this is a 5-week class so no time for a research paper. We will be doing an abbreviated Critical Thinking paper. You can select TV program or a movie that is political in nature. You can clear your selection with me if you wish. I have provided a structured approach (below) to help you complete the assignment quickly. Let me know if you have any questions.

Examples: there are exceptional albeit language inappropriate options on premium channels like HBO, Showtime, etc. You could do John Oliver, Bill Maher, Trevor Noah, programs like VEEP or could do an episode of House of Cards, movies like Bridge of Spies, even Dave.

- **3 pages** (typed/double-spaced in **Microsoft Word/Open Office**) –
- Paper structure
 - Upper left-hand corner:
Political Science 101 Writing Assignment
Title of TV program or movie
Your Name
 - Part 1 (label SUMMARY): a summary of TV program or movie (**1 page**)
 - Part 2 (label REACTIONS): your reactions to the TV program or movie (**1 page**).
Be sure to answer the following questions (**be sure to list each question and then respond to it**):
 1. What did you find most interesting (politically)?
 2. Was the movie/program objective (why or why not)?

3. What did you like/not like about the movie/program?

Be sure to list each question and then respond to it.

- Part 3 (label CONCLUSION). What did you learn? (1 page)
- Grading criteria: the writing assignment will be graded on the basis of the following:
 - 100 points possible:
 - Appropriate program/movie (10 points)
 - Appropriate length (minimum 3 pages double-spaced) (20 points)
 - Follows required format (Title Heading, Part 1 Summary, Part 2 Reactions – including listing/response to three questions) and Part 3 Conclusion including labeling (30 points)
 - Evaluation of content of summary, reaction and conclusion (40 points)
- The assignment must be submitted to the Writing Assignment Drop Box by the scheduled due date.
- **Any assignments submitted after the due date/time will still be accepted but will be subject to a full letter grade reduction for being late**

Academic Dishonesty: will not be tolerated; this course assumes mature and responsible behavior on your part. Any documented academic dishonesty on tests, quizzes, research exercises and/or the discussion forum will result in a grade of "F" for the course. YOU are taking this class, not your friends or family members. I know this to be a problem especially for online classes so will be extra-vigilant. Please ensure that it is YOUR work I am evaluating.

Faculty Check-in Practices: I will normally be active in the class on a daily basis and will do my very best to respond to any student emails promptly. You are welcome to call, text or email me.

Student Behavior and Discussion Forum Postings: I expect everyone to respect a diversity of opinions, to discuss ideas but not engage in personal attacks and to maintain an appropriate decorum online. Avoid the use of profanity and other language that could be viewed as inappropriate or offensive. This is a Political Science class – we deal with contemporary political topics and issues. Some will indeed be controversial. You remain subject to the Code of Behavior for TMCC students. I reserve the right to end our discussions in this class and move on to additional course lecture.

ADA Statement: Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability are encouraged to meet privately with their instructors to discuss their specific needs and must [contact the Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC) in RDMT 114 (or call 775-673-7277) to establish documentation of a disability and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Summer Session 2017

IMPORTANT: everything in the class is open and available. You have five weeks to complete the work of the class. You can work ahead or fall behind (a little) but this listing is intended to serve as a RECOMMENDED PACE to successfully complete the course in the allotted time. **Students must participate in weekly discussion and submit the writing assignment on time.**

Week 1

Week of July 10th

Topics: **Nature of Government/Foundation of American Government**

Readings: Chapter 1: The Nature of Government
Chapter 2: Foundation of American Government
Documents: Declaration of Independence/Articles of Confederation/US Constitution

Online Content: Topic Powerpoints/Videos

Discussion: Getting To Know Each Other – Introduction To Current Events

Quizzes: Chapters 1 & 2

Activity: Read the Course Syllabus – ensure you are aware of any/all course expectations, coursework and course deadlines. Contact me if you have any confusion or concerns.

Week 2

Week of July 17th

Topics: **Federalism/Political Attitudes & Participation/How Do Citizens Connect With Their Government (the Media, political parties, elections & voting)**

Readings: Chapter 3: Federalism
Chapter 4: Political Attitudes & Participation
Chapter 5: How Citizens Connect With Their Government

Online Content: Topic Powerpoints & Videos

Discussion: American Elections

Quizzes: Chapters 3, 4 & 5

Activity: Review options for getting involved and increasing your understanding of American politics at the local, state, national and international levels

Week 3

Week of July 24th

Topics: **The Three Branches of Government**

Readings: Chapter 6: Congress
Chapter 7: The Presidency
Chapter 8: The Bureaucracy
Chapter 9: The Judiciary

Online Content: Topic Powerpoints & Videos

Discussion: The Presidency of Donald Trump

Quizzes/Exam: Chapters 6, 7, 8 & 9

Activity: explore the websites for each branch and check out the Crash Course videos

Week 4

Week of July 31st

Topics: **Civil Liberties, Civil Rights & Public Policy (Foreign & Domestic)**

Readings: Chapter 10: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights
Chapter 11: Public Policy

Online Content: Topic Powerpoints & Videos

Discussion: Civil Liberties

Quizzes: Chapters 10 & 11

Activity: Learn the amendments of the Bill of Rights – you should know them

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE: FRIDAY, JULY 28TH BY 5:00 P.M.
TO THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX**

Week 5

Week of August 7st FINAL WEEK

Topics: **Nevada/Comparative Political & Economic Systems**

Readings: Nevada
Chapter 13 Comparative Political & Economic Systems

Online Content: Topic Powerpoints & Videos

Quizzes: Nevada Exam & Chapter 13

Discussion: Nevada

CLASS CLOSING FRIDAY, AUGUST 10th AT 5:00 P.M.