GREAT BASIN COLLEGE
PSC 101 – Introduction to American Politics
Danny A. Gonzales, Ph.D.
Fall 2018 Syllabus (Section 1004)
August 27, 2018 to December 16, 2018

I. Course Number & Title:
PSC 101—Introduction to American Politics (3.0 credits)
Class Location—WebCampus Online Environment. NOTE: Class is 16 weeks long.

II. Prerequisites:
No pre- or co-requisites are required for class.

III. Catalog Description:
PSC 101: Introduction to American Politics—A survey of United States, national, state, and local governments with emphasis on the cultural aspects of the governing process. Satisfies the legislative requirement for the United States and Nevada Constitutions.

IV. Course Description:
Do you know why the elephant is the symbol of the Republican Party and the donkey represents the Democratic Party? Did you know that political parties, candidates, and interest groups can determine how you will vote based on the food you eat, the soft drinks and beer you drink, and the vehicle you drive? This introductory class examines the basic principles of American and state government such as power, authority, legitimacy, and force. Current events, popular culture examples, documentaries, and online and multimedia resources are used to accompany the readings and introduce diverse political perspectives.

The course will study numerous aspects of American government and key participants and influences in the political arena. Topics to be covered include: U.S. and Nevada Constitutions, the Presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court, federal court system, voting, socialization process, political parties, interest groups, and the media. We will also be examining a number of current political events, governmental actions, and public policy decisions as part of the weekly Bulletin Board Discussions (BBDs). At the beginning of each week, the following course materials will be provided:

1. Chapter lecture notes.
   a. Focus and main points.
   b. Summary and list of major concepts
   c. Lecture outline
2. Chapter PowerPoint presentation.
3. Announcements.
4. Student learning objectives.
5. Websites, resources, videos, and documentaries to supplement assigned readings.

These materials are available to you on WebCampus under Modules, Discussions, and Announcements. Ongoing emails and announcements will be made throughout the course.
V. Instructor Information:
Danny A. Gonzales, Ph.D. (Office hours posted below)
Political Science Professor
Great Basin College
1500 College Parkway
Elko, Nevada 89801
Phone: 775.753.2114; Fax: 775.753.3509; College email: danny.gonzales@gbcnv.edu
College Website: http://www2.gbcnv.edu/profiles/gonzales_danny.html
Office: Carl A. Diekhans Center for Industrial Technology (DCIT), Social Sciences Department, Room 128

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office Hours</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>By appointment.</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>By appointment.</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>By appointment.</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>By appointment.</td>
<td>By appointment.</td>
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Note: Contact instructor for scheduling appointments during summer and winter sessions.

VI. Required & Recommended Textbooks/Materials:

Required

Recommended
Quick Study Guides Available Through GBC Book Store:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Government</th>
<th>U.S. Constitution</th>
<th>Political Science</th>
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Additional reading materials will be distributed in class via WebCampus and/or placed on reserve in the GBC Library.

VII. Grading Policy/Point System:

Grades will be based on the following:

Assignments
Four (4) examinations (60 points each)
Four (4) BBDs & Syllabus (20 points each)/Rubric Quiz (10 points)

Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Percent %</th>
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<th>Percent %</th>
<th>Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>F</td>
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VIII. Attendance & Class Participation
Participation in Bulletin Board Discussions (BBDs) is essential for the final class grade. Since the class does not meet face-to-face, timely responses to the BBDs are mandatory. CHECK WEBCAMPUS FOR EMAILS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND THE WAR ROOM DAILY FOR ONGOING CLASS COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS.

IX. General Education Objectives & Select Student Learning Outcomes
General education objectives can be referenced on page 79 of the GBC Catalog. Learning outcomes for U.S. and Nevada Constitutions are available in WebCampus. In addition to degree requirements, the faculty of GBC has established a goal to ensure that all students graduating in either AA, AS, BA, BS degrees have had the opportunity to develop an awareness of and abilities in the following specific areas:

COMMUNICATIONS & EXPRESSIONS
1. Written Communications
2. Oral communications
3. Evidence-Based Communications
4. Fine Arts

LOGICAL & SCIENTIFIC REASONING
5. Mathematical Reasoning
6. Scientific Reasoning
7. Scientific Data Interpretation

HUMAN SOCIETIES & EXPERIENCE
8. Structure of Societies
 *9. American Constitutions & Institutions
10. Humanities

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCY
11. Technological Proficiency

*Note that after taking PSC 101, under the objective for “American Constitutions & Institutions,” students should be able to accomplish the following:

- Demonstrate an understanding of American constitutions and institutions and their development.
- Demonstrate understanding of processes of social stratification and inequality in American society.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the methods used to study American society.

Each of these three objectives will be covered in class, and the following table below outlines in more detail how the student learning outcomes are assessed with specific measurements and course examples.
**Student Learning Outcomes**

Additional student learning outcomes for each chapter are posted in WebCampus. Upon the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Student Learning Outcomes &amp; General Education Objectives</th>
<th>Measurements &amp; Course Examples</th>
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</table>
| 1. Define politics and civic engagement by explaining the importance in American society. | Bulletin Board Discussion #1 and #4  
Exam #1, #2, and #3  
**Example:** The text emphasizes the importance of an engaged citizenry in making democracy meaningful. Each chapter concludes with a “National Journal” article that highlights the relationship between an informed citizenry and government.  
**Example:** After watching the documentary “Street Fight” and reading Chapter 7 on political participation, the student will write a response describing how they are involved in the community and discuss whether or not their participation makes a difference in the public policymaking process. |
| 2. List and explain significance of the major constitutional principles. | Bulletin Board Discussion #1  
Exam #1  
**Example:** After reading and discussing the foundations of American democracy, determining the influence of the philosophers during the Enlightenment on the Founding Fathers, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, and examining the factors associated with constitutional change, students will highlight the importance of the separation of powers and checks and balances.  
**Example:** Based on the discussion regarding the foundations of American democracy and events leading up to the Constitutional Convention, students will write a response that explores similar factors and contemporary conditions that would justify the need to convene a Constitutional Convention in the modern era. |
| 3. Explain president’s influence over public opinion and the government’s policy agenda. | Bulletin Board Discussion #3  
Exam #3  
**Example:** The class will be introduced to a variety of PBS video clips that demonstrate presidential powers, roles, and styles. Based on these clips and class discussions, students will write a response that outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the Executive Office, provides a definition of “presidential greatness,” and discusses the economic and political conditions that impacts decisions. |
| 4. Explain role of Congress, committee structure, and role in making public policy. | Exam #3  
**Example:** The exam will measure the students’ knowledge related to the origin and powers of Congress in Article I, resources required to get elected, incumbent advantages, responsibilities and benefits, keys to political power, and committee structure. |
| 5. Relate evolution of the Supreme Court as a policymaker and the civil rights and liberties of individuals. | Bulletin Board Discussion #4  
**Example:** Students will be able to diagram the U.S. Court System and understand the nature of decisions made by the courts. The [www.oyez.org](http://www.oyez.org) website, U.S. Supreme Court website, and “The History and Functions of
<table>
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<tr>
<th>General Education Objective: Demonstrate understanding of processes of social stratification and inequality in American society.</th>
<th>the U.S. Supreme Court” documentary will assist in demonstrating judicial activism and restraint in landmark decisions.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6. Itemize primary functions of a political party and role in elections.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bulletin Board Discussion #3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Example:</strong> After discussing Chapter 9: Parties and Political Campaigns and using the <a href="http://www.270towin.com">www.270towin.com</a> website regarding the electoral college, students will be able to identify voting groups needed to win presidential election from 1789 to 2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods used to study American society.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7. Assess roles and influence of interest groups and lobbyists.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bulletin Board Discussion #3</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Exam #2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Example:</strong> After watching the documentary “Karl Rove: The Architect” and researching the Center for Responsive Politics website for campaign financing, students will determine the level of influence exerted by interest groups, PACs, and 527s. Students will also research and report on an interest group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods used to study American society.</td>
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<td><strong>8. Define primary characteristics of Nevada’s Constitution, political interests, and governmental structure.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nevada Constitution Study Guide</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Exam #4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Example:</strong> Using a Nevada Constitution Study Guide, The Sagebrush State, and state websites for the three branches, students will learn about the primary roles and functions of state government.</td>
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<td>General Education Objective: Demonstrate an understanding of American constitutions and institutions and their development.</td>
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<td><strong>9. Apply online resources, popular culture examples, current events, and documentaries to critically analyze the governing process and participants.</strong></td>
<td><strong>All Bulletin Board Discussions and Exams.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Example:</strong> Online resources such as C-SPAN, YouTube, and Politico as well as government websites and video documentaries will be introduced throughout the semester to complement the readings. Students will make connections between the readings and these supplementary resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods used to study American society.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10. Dissect political agendas, platforms, and biases associated with interest groups, media, political parties, and elections.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emphasis on BBD #2 and #3; Exam #2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>All Bulletin Board Discussions and Exams.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Example:</strong> Students will be required to research the two major political parties and minor third parties to determine their policy preferences and platforms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Objective: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods used to study American society.</td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> Students will take an online test provided by the Pew Research Center, assess their placement on the political spectrum, and plot political linkage institutions on the spectrum.</td>
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X. Course Assignments, Content, & Schedule

There are four examinations that cover numerous aspects of American government and key participants and influences in the political arena, including Bulletin Board Discussions that count for class participation. THIS IS NOT A SELF-PACED COURSE. If you have a question regarding any of the assignments or materials for this course, I make every attempt to respond to you within 12-hours. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OFFICIALLY WITHDRAWING BEFORE 60% OF THE COURSE IS COMPLETED. IF THE COURSE IS NOT OFFICIALLY DROPPED, AN “F” GRADE WILL BE ASSIGNED.

A. Examinations & Quizzes:
The take home examinations and quizzes will be posted to WebCampus and due according to the instructions posted by the instructor. Examinations and quizzes consist of multiple choice, true-false questions, and essay questions. Taking the examinations and quizzes is an individual exercise, and collaboration with others is not permissible.

B. Seminar Participation/Bulletin Board Discussions:
Class participation and postings to the Bulletin Board Discussions are mandatory. It needs to be stressed that since the class does not physically meet on a weekly basis, BBDS count as weekly participation. Respond to the weekly bulletin board prompts and questions. Directly reference the text 3-4 times in each part to earn full credit. Appropriate citations and references to textbooks and online resources are expected. Student responses are subject to random screening using plagiarism detection software. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and could result in removal from class.

Responses should be thoughtful, concise, and in your own words. Additionally, responses must be based in the required readings in AM GOV, The Sagebrush State, and applicable materials and online resources introduced in class. Cite the materials. Refer to the BBD Participation Rubric on WebCampus for posting criteria.

WEEKLY TIMELINE & DUE DATES ON LAST TWO-PAGES OF SYLLABUS)

Unless otherwise noted, weekly BBD postings and responses follow timeline below:
1. BBD questions posted under Discussions by instructor on Monday mornings.
2. BBD responses posted on Monday morning are due by Sunday at 11:55 p.m.
3. Late BBD responses ARE NOT accepted. There are no exceptions.

In order to earn the maximum number of points, responses should be at least 750 words. Ongoing bulletin board discussions (BBD) are recorded as class participation. Wikipedia and similar online encyclopedias are not acceptable and if used will result in failing the assignment. Utilize text, materials, and resources provided by instructor.

Using appropriate net etiquette, you are encouraged to respond to other weekly BBD postings and contribute in The War Room: Current Events & Popular Culture BBD where current political events and government activities will be discussed. Online resources will be posted related to the weekly Bulletin Board Discussions (BBDs) as the semester progresses. Refer to the last two pages of the syllabus for specific BBD and exam due dates.
C. Important college and classroom policies:

1. Policy of Academic Integrity
Academic honesty is expected in this course and all college courses. Acts such as cheating and plagiarism are violations of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Code of Conduct as well as violations of the standards of intellectual dishonesty. All student work must be original and authentic. Any acts of cheating, copying, and/or plagiarizing are violations of the NSHE Code of Conduct and will be taken seriously. Students who cheat, copy another’s work, or plagiarize from the Internet or other sources are subject to consequences ranging from dismissal from and failure of a class to dismissal from the college. Tutors are available in the GBC Academic Success Center for assistance with appropriate documentation and citations.

2. Student Conduct Policy
Messages, attitudes, or any other form of communication deemed to be outside the bounds of common decency/civility as judged by common standards of classroom behavior (determined, as they would be in a regular classroom, by the instructor) will not be tolerated. The behavior of GBC students, as a member of the NSHE, is governed by GBC and NSHE Code. Misconduct, as defined and established in the NSHE Code, Title II, Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2 and the above misconduct as defined by GBC, is subject to Disciplinary Sanctions as defined by NSHE Code, Title 2.

3. Class Disruptions
Cell phones and other multimedia devices disrupt class and need to be turned off, stored away, and out of sight. Text messaging is not allowed. Check with me if there are special circumstances that require you to have your phone on during class. Coming to class late is also disruptive. Habitual lateness and leaving the classroom during the lectures is not acceptable and considered disruptive. Disruptive behavior will result in being removed from class.

4. Reasonable Accommodation Statement
Reasonable Accommodation Statement: Great Basin College is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A qualified student must furnish current verification of disability. The Disability Services Office, located in Leonard Student Life Center, will assist qualified students with disabilities in securing the appropriate and reasonable accommodation, assist qualified students with disabilities in securing the appropriate and reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. For more information or further assistance, please call 775.753.2771.

5. Campus Security
GBC is committed to the safety of our students and has a duty to promote awareness and prevention programs for violence on campus under the Jeanne Clery Act as well as the Campus SaVE (Sexual Violence Elimination Act) and VAWA (Violence Against Women
Act), which are amendments to Clery. Acts of violence include, but are not limited to, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Acts of violence can occur on the physical campus or centers of GBC in addition to field placement sites, clinical practice settings, and other places where college or class activities occur. As well, the online environment at GBC is considered a GBC site. If you experience any incidence where your safety has been threatened or violated, or if you feel threatened or harassed, immediately report this to me, any center director, faculty, or staff member, or directly to the Director of Environmental Health, Safety & Security 775.753.2115 or the Vice President for Student Services 775.753.2282.

X. PSC 101: Introduction to American Politics Tentative Course Schedule
The following is the schedule for the fall 2018 semester, including bulletin board discussions, examinations, quizzes, and assigned materials. Refer to WebCampus for assigned political documentaries and online resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Other Materials</th>
<th>Date Posted</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Aug. 27</td>
<td><strong>AM GOV - Losco &amp; Baker</strong>&lt;br&gt;Introductions Overview of Expectations&lt;br&gt;Chapter 1: Citizenship in Our Changing Democracy</td>
<td>The Sagebrush State - Bowers&lt;br&gt;Chapter 1: Nevada Origins &amp; Early History&lt;br&gt;Street Fight&lt;br&gt;What is Politics?: The First Day of Class</td>
<td>Syllabus Quiz and Introductions&lt;br&gt;BBD #1 Monday Sept. 3</td>
<td>DUE DATE Sunday Sept. 2 11:55 p.m.</td>
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<td>Week 3 Sept. 10</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 3: Federalism: Citizenship and the Dispersal of Power</strong>&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---</td>
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<td>Week 4 Sept. 17</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 4: Civil Liberties</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chapter 3: Civil Rights &amp; Liberties in Nevada&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---</td>
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<td>EXAM #1 Thursday Sept. 20</td>
<td>DUE DATE Sunday Sept. 23 11:55 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 Sept. 24</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 5: Civil Rights: Toward a More Equal Citizenry</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chapter 10: State &amp; Local Finance&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---</td>
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<td>Week 6 Oct. 1</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 6: Public Opinion: Listening to Citizens</strong>&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---</td>
<td>Who Counts?: Election Reform in America</td>
<td>BBD #2 Monday Oct. 1</td>
<td>DUE DATE Sunday Oct. 7 11:55 p.m.</td>
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<td>Week 7 Oct. 8</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 7: Political Participation</strong>&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---&lt;br&gt;---</td>
<td>The Secrets of Body Language</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>Chapter 8: Interest Groups in America</td>
<td>Chapter 5: Interest Groups &amp; Lobbying</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Parties and Political Campaigns: Citizens and the Electoral Process</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Political Parties &amp; Elections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>Chapter 10: Media: Tuning In or Tuning Out</td>
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<td>Karl Rove: The Architect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>Chapter 11: Congress: Doing the People’s Business</td>
<td>Chapter 6: The Nevada Legislature</td>
<td>Ken Burns Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>Chapter 12: The Presidency: Power &amp; Paradox</td>
<td>Chapter 7: The Nevada Executive</td>
<td>Mandate: The President and the People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td>Chapter 13: Bureaucracy: Citizens as Owners and Consumers</td>
<td>Chapter 9: City &amp; County Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>Chapter 14: The Courts: Judicial Power in a Democratic Setting</td>
<td>Chapter 8: The Nevada Judiciary</td>
<td>The Supreme Court PBS Series One Nation Under Bill of Rights: Bill of Responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Refer to WebCampus and ongoing class communications for updated information on class schedule. 
(2) Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus during the semester. 
(3) Proper net etiquette is to be used during the course of the semester, and flaming should be reported to the instructor immediately. 
(4) If you have a question regarding any of the assignments or materials for this course, I will make every attempt to respond to you within 12-hours.