Current Issues in American Public Affairs & Politics

OSHER 630-002

Times: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM
Location: Commander's House, Fort Douglas
Note: The first class on 3/26 meets at the Tenth East Senior Center, 237 S. 1000 E., SLC
Instructor: Tim Chambless, PhD

Course Overview

Welcome. I am Tim Chambless. Since 2007, I have taught Current Issues in American Public Affairs/Politics for highly-motivated students who have participated in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. I enjoy teaching mature students who have a desire to continue learning throughout their lives, and come to this class ready to ask questions. I like my Osher classes to be lively dialogues where important contemporary issues are discussed in a seminar format.

This course highlights current events. Important public policy issues – international, national and local – are considered. At the outset of class, handouts are distributed to all students which serve as talking points. However, the class is flexible and any subject can be examined. Given modern technology and breaking news stories, this class can serve as a forum for dialogue on any subject. We can do what Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, tried to do!

When I am not teaching for Osher, I am an Associate Professor/Lecturer at the University of Utah in the Department of Political Science. For 32 years, I have taught classes in American National Government, Constitutional Law, U.S. Law and Politics, State and Local Government, Political Parties and Mass Communication Law, Controversial Legal Issues and Current Events. Since 1994, I have planned and led an unique one-week student seminar in Washington, D.C. I am also the Academic Outreach Coordinator for the U of U’s Hinckley Institute of Politics.

This class emphasizes discussion and dialogue. As your Osher Instructor, I believe that the answer can never be known if the question is not asked. I prefer to discuss with students rather than lecture at students. Also, I believe that there is no such thing as a bad question -- only bad answers. If you believe that I have provided a bad answer to your question, then we can explore together. It is my hope that each student will feel that his/her question has been considered by the end of our class time together.
COURSE MATERIALS

Our class will be enhanced with the use of news segments from my IPAD2 intended to be “set-up” pieces to stimulate discussion and dialogue. In addition, news analysis stories from newspapers such as the New York Times, Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News, BBC and PBS and others will be presented as background material. Also, hard copies of any breaking news stories from Cable News Network and National Public Radio may be provided if needed.

I believe it is important to get involved in the political process, and in the community. I have worked as an aide for a U.S. Senator and Congressman, Governor of Utah and Mayor of Salt Lake City. I have participated in nearly 30 Utah political campaigns. I served (1990-2001) on the Salt Lake City Board of Adjustment (hears/decides planning disputes, and was Board Chair for 8 years). I served on the Salt Lake County Fine Arts Advisory Board, the City Citizen-Police Review Board, and was a Utah board member of the American Civil Liberties Union. And during 2001-2010, I served nearly 9 years on the Salt Lake City Planning Commission -- appointed by the SLC Mayor and City Council – where I have served as Chair & Vice Chair.

CELL PHONES in CLASS

Please turn off all cell phones during our class meetings. A ringing phone is highly disruptive to the learning environment. Please be considerate of all others in the class.

NO EXAMS and NO PAPERS

Yes, it is true. There are no exams and no papers for this class. I do hope that you will test yourself – that you will stimulate your own thinking with active participation in this class. Scheduled discussion topics may be complemented by questions on breaking news stories.

SCHEDULE of DISCUSSION TOPICS

March 26: “In America there is only one criminal class: Congress.” – Mark Twain
April 9: 2013 economy? Income taxes? The national debt? Record deficits?
April 16: Has “the sequester” fallen over “the fiscal cliff” as we pay our taxes?
April 30: “May Day” is tomorrow... What problems loom on America’s horizon?

Good luck!

Tim Chambless, Ph.D.