POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government
Meeting times: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:20
Room: Forest Resources-2 / 100
Instructor: Professor Alexa Bankert
Contact: alexa.bankert@uga.edu
Office: Baldwin Hall 380F
Office Hours: Tuesday 1–2 or by appointment

Course Description and Objective
This course is important – whether you are a Political Science major or not. You will be introduced to the fundamentals of the American government, such as its political institutions and main actors. Most importantly, this class aims to demonstrate how you are connected to the government in your daily life and present you with tools to become informed and act in politically meaningful ways. For this purpose, we will also examine what being American means in today’s society and how our political institutions and behavior compare to other countries. By doing so, you gain a better understanding of how specific features of the American system shape politics. Ultimately, you will leave this class with a comprehensive understanding of how to critically evaluate and actively participate in the American political system.

Required Text
"We the People" (11th Essentials Edition) – by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, and Robert J. Spitzer with access to InQuizitive.

“Georgia Politics in a State of Change” (4th Custom Edition for the University of Georgia) – by Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie.

****Please do not buy this book until after the first breakout session****

Sections
You are expected to attend one section in addition to the main lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please note that section attendance is mandatory. All sections take place on Mondays.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sect.</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>10672</td>
<td>8:00-8:50</td>
<td>Baldwin Hall 301</td>
<td>Lian Shanshan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Shanshan.Lian@uga.edu">Shanshan.Lian@uga.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>10675</td>
<td>9:05-9:55</td>
<td>Leconte Hall 135</td>
<td>Lian Shanshan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Shanshan.Lian@uga.edu">Shanshan.Lian@uga.edu</a></td>
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<td>10676</td>
<td>9:05-9:55</td>
<td>Leconte Hall 322</td>
<td>Aman Bekmagambetov</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aman@uga.edu">aman@uga.edu</a></td>
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<td>10678</td>
<td>10:10-11:00</td>
<td>Leconte Hall 230</td>
<td>Aman Bekmagambetov</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aman@uga.edu">aman@uga.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>10679</td>
<td>10:10-11:00</td>
<td>Leconte Hall 135</td>
<td>Simon Williamson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:simon.williamson25@uga.edu">simon.williamson25@uga.edu</a></td>
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<td>10681</td>
<td>11:15-12:05</td>
<td>Baldwin Hall 102</td>
<td>Simon Williamson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:simon.williamson25@uga.edu">simon.williamson25@uga.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Baldwin Hall 301</td>
<td>Youkyoung Jeong</td>
<td><a href="mailto:youkyoungjeong25@uga.edu">youkyoungjeong25@uga.edu</a></td>
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<td>12:20-1:10</td>
<td>Baldwin Hall 301</td>
<td>Youkyoung Jeong</td>
<td><a href="mailto:youkyoungjeong25@uga.edu">youkyoungjeong25@uga.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>10686</td>
<td>12:20-1:10</td>
<td>Journalism 513</td>
<td>Brittany Linn Cleveland</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brittany.cleveland25@uga.edu">brittany.cleveland25@uga.edu</a></td>
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<td>10689</td>
<td>1:25-2:15</td>
<td>Baldwin Hall 102</td>
<td>Brittany Linn Cleveland</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brittany.cleveland25@uga.edu">brittany.cleveland25@uga.edu</a></td>
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<td>10690</td>
<td>1:25-2:15</td>
<td>Journalism 513</td>
<td>Tara Trask</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tet61@uga.edu">tet61@uga.edu</a></td>
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Evaluation

**Response Paper:** You will complete one short paper in this course. Topics are listed in the syllabus and match each week’s theme. Note that the due date of the paper varies according to the topic you choose. Short papers can range from 5 to 10 pages (double spaced) and are due at the end of a week’s theme as listed on the syllabus. Please make sure to discuss the criteria of the paper with your TA in advance.

**Midterm:** The midterm will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty. These questions will cover material from the first half of the semester. *As of now, the midterm is scheduled for Thursday, October 4th from 9:30am – 10:20 am.*

**Final Exam:** The final exam is not cumulative and will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty. *As of now, the exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12th from 8:00 - 11:00 am.*

**Weekly Assignments:** There will be short weekly assignments which you can access on the InQuizitive website that accompanies your textbook. You will need to create an account in order to submit your assignments, which are due every Friday at 6pm of each week. In addition, you will be asked for a student set ID, which is linked to the section you choose (see below). If you have trouble with the registration process, please contact your TA.

Student Set ID is **34532** for section 10672 from 8:00am to 8:50am (TA Lian Shanshan)
Student Set ID is **34533** for section 10675 from 9:05 to 9:55am (TA Lian Shanshan)

Student Set ID is **34535** for section 10676 from 9:05 to 9:55am (TA Aman Bekmagambetor)
Student Set ID is **34536** for section 10678 from 10:10am to 11am (TA Aman Bekmagambetor)

Student Set ID is **34537** for section 10679 from 10:10am to 11am (TA Simon Williamson)
Student Set ID is **34538** for section 10681 from 11:15am to 12:05pm (TA Simon Williamson)

Student Set ID is **34539** for section 10683 from 11:15am to 12:05pm (TA Youkyoung Jeong)
Student Set ID is **34540** for section 10685 from 12:20pm to 1:10pm (TA Youkyoung Jeong)

Student Set ID is **34541** for section 10686 from 12:20pm to 1:10pm (TA Brittany Linn Cleveland)
Student Set ID is **34542** for section 10689 from 1:25pm to 2:15pm (TA Brittany Linn Cleveland)

Student Set ID is **34543** for section 10690 from 1:25pm to 2:15pm (TA Tara Trask)

Readings and Quizzes: The required readings typically include one chapter of the textbook per week. If any additional readings are assigned they will be made available electronically on eLC. It is important that you stay current with these readings so that you can follow along with lectures and participate in discussions in your sections. I would strongly recommend you finish the readings before your section takes place since *there will be unannounced short quizzes (3-5 questions) based on the assigned readings for that week so make sure you are familiar with each chapter’s key terms.*

**In-Section Participation:** Do not hesitate to speak up in class or in your section! And if you have a question, other people are likely to have questions, too. Especially in your section, there
will be discussions that should demonstrate your critical reflection on the material covered in class as well as on weekly assignments.

**Online Research Study:** You are required to participate in an online research study. The study will take approximately 20-25 minutes and is supposed to provide you with an understanding of political science research.

**Grading Breakdown by Percentage:**
- Final Exam: 20%
- Midterm: 20%
- Response Paper: 20%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Weekly Assignments: 10%
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Participation in Online Research Study: 5%

**Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades**
- 100-94 A
- 93-90 A-
- 92-89 B+
- 88-87 B
- 86-84 B-
- 83-80 C+
- 80-77 C
- 79-76 C-
- 75-72 D+
- 71-69 D
- 68-60 D-
- 60-0 F

**Grade Appeals, Incompletes, Late Assignments, and Make-Up Policy**
Any questions you have regarding grades should be directed to your teaching assistant. If you are unable to resolve the matter with him or her, you may appeal the grade to me. Keep in mind that formal grade appeals must be made in writing, and in the case of a paper, I will re-grade your entire paper. Therefore, your grade can go up or down. A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible. Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be presented to the teaching assistant and accepted prior to the exam when feasible. Late assignments will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late (including weekends). If you need a (reasonable) extension, talk to your teaching assistant.

**Office Hours**
Students who are having difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments are encouraged to contact their teaching assistant. Don’t be afraid to come by. However, please note that office hours are for clarification of material, not for recreating a lecture if you skipped class. If you like to talk to me, feel free to stop by my office during office hours but please email me in advance if possible.

**Syllabus Policy:**
I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus if necessary. I will give you fair notice (at least a week) if something, such as a reading assignment, is to change.
Disability Resource Center
If you anticipate needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, you must register for services with the Disability Resource Center. Additional information can be found here: http://drc.uga.edu/

Withdrawal Policy
Undergraduate students can only withdraw from four courses and receive a withdrawal-passing (WP) grade while enrolled at the University. Students can drop any class without penalty during the drop/add period at the beginning of every semester. Dropped courses during the drop/add period do not qualify as withdrawals. Instructors have the ability to withdraw a student from the class due to excessive absences (see course attendance policy).
Please review the policy here: http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals

Culture of Honesty Policy
You are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures relating to academic honesty. To understand what constitutes dishonest work, as defined by the University, please carefully review the policy here: https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic honesty-policy

Course Schedule

First Week: August 15th and 17th
Topic: The Citizen and the Government
Readings: Chapter 1 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 1 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Make a list of the most important political values you hold. How do they fit into the broader American values? (Due: August 22nd)

Second Week: August 22nd and 24th
Topic: The Founding and the Constitution
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 2 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Imagine that you are a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. What would you include in (or exclude from) the document? (Due: August 29th)

Third Week: August 29th
Topic: Federalism
Readings: Chapter 3 in “We The People”. Also, listen to http://www.npr.org/2013/03/28/175596229/the-road-to-the-supreme-court-arguments-on-gay-marriage
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 3 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Think about same-sex marriage, which puts state power in contention with national power. Write out your stance on whether the issue should be addressed
at the national or state level. Justify your decision. (Due: September 5th)

Please note that class will not take place on August 31st.

Fourth Week: September 5th and 7th
Topic: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
Readings: Chapter 4 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 4 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Imagine you are a legislative staffer. Draft a policy memo on the extent of government surveillance of American citizens. Should there be limits on government surveillance in the fight against terrorism? (Due: September 12th)

Fifth Week: September 12th and 14th
Topic: Public Opinion
Readings: Chapter 5 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 5 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Take the Political Compass test at www.politicalcompass.org or the Pew Research Center’s political typology quiz at www.people-press.org. These sites rate your political ideology based on your opinions. Can ideology help you to guide your political opinions or should your political opinions guide your ideology? Discuss. (Due: September 19th)

Sixth Week: September 19th and 21st
Topic: The Media
Readings: Chapter 6 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 6 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Pick a current political topic and compare how it is reported on one of the national news (ABC, CBS, or NBC), one of the cable news (CNN, MSNBC, or FOX NEWS), and one newspaper (New York Times, Wall Street Journal, or The Washington Post). (Due: September 26th)

Seventh Week: September 26th and 28th
Topic: Political Parties, Participation, and Elections
Readings: Chapter 7 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 7 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Write a list of reasons individuals may not vote. In your view, are these obstacles necessary? Examine the role of personal motivation as well as institutional barriers in your answer. (Due: October 3rd)

Eighth Week: October 3rd and 5th
Topic: Interest Groups
Readings: Chapter 8 in “We The People”. Also, read: http://themonkeycage.org/2013/05/shadow-lobbyists-and-the-revolving-door-or-what-anthony-weiner-and-newt-gingrich-have-in-common/
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 8 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Imagine you are an aide to a member of Congress. Write a policy memo for or against more regulation of lobbying. (Due: October 10th)
Ninth Week: October 10th and 12th
Topic: Congress
Readings: Chapter 9 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 9 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Look up your representative’s recent voting records in the Washington Post’s Database. Make a list of five issues he or she voted on, and state whether you would have voted the same way on behalf of your district. Justify your decisions. (Due: October 17th)

Tenth Week: October 17th and 19th
Topic: The Presidency
Readings: Chapter 10 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 10 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Consider President Obama’s transgender directive or the executive order on immigration. Explain why you think the president should or should not have the power to act on these issues. (Due: October 24th)

Eleventh Week: October 24th and 26th
Topic: Bureaucracy (it is not going to be as boring as it sounds)
Readings: Chapter 11 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 11 on Inquizitive

Twelfth Week: October 31st and November 2nd
Topic: The Federal Courts
Readings: Chapter 12 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 12 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Identify one Supreme Court case that affects your life and explain how. For ideas, search www.uscourts.gov for their “Landmark Supreme Court Cases about Students” page. (Due: November 7th)

Thirteenth Week: November 7th and 9th
Topic: Domestic Policy
Readings: Chapter 13 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 13 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Write a list of how you expect economic and social policies to affect your life in the next five years. (Due: November 14th)

Fourteenth Week: November 14th and 16th
Topic: Foreign Policy
Readings: Chapter 14 in “We The People”
Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 14 on Inquizitive
Potential Short Paper Topic: Why should we care about foreign policy? Is Isolationism possible in
today's world? (Due: November 21st)

Thanksgiving Break November 20th to 24th

**Fifteenth Week: November 28th and 30th**  
*Topic*: Conclusion, Review, and Preparation for Final Exam

**Sixteenth Week: December 5th**  
*Topic*: Review and Preparation for Final Exam