

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Political Science 1101  
Maymester 2018  
MTWRF 9:30am-12:15pm  
Baldwin 301

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## Course Description:

This course is intended to provide students with a broad understanding of American government. Throughout the semester we will examine the origins, development and functions of the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government. In addition to highlighting how these branches operate independently, attention will be given to their interactions with one another. The course will also discuss the role federalism, the media, public opinion, elections and voting play in the American political system.

## Course Goals:

The primary goal of this course is to provide students with a conceptual background and a set of analytical tools that they can use to understand and critically analyze what is written in the newspaper or said in the news today, tomorrow, and in the more distant future. The hope is that these skills will give students a better understanding and appreciation of the American political process that they can use to be informed and knowledgeable citizens.

## Required Books:

The following book is required and available at the Campus Bookstore:

Samuel Kernell, Gary C. Jacobson, Thad Kousser and Lynn Vavreck. 2017. *The Logic of American Politics*, 8th Edition. CQ Press.

Students will not only be expected to have done the reading assignments, but should also be aware of relevant news stories. As such, I recommend reading a daily newspaper—such as the New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com>) and/or the Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>)—or at least checking cnn.com. Additional links to political blogs or websites can be found on the instructors' website.

## Course Grading:

Your grade in this class will be assigned according to the following:

1. **Class Attendance/Participation (10% of final grade):** One of the goals for this class is for students to become comfortable discussing political institutions, issues and events. Hence, they will be encouraged to attend and participate in course discussions. More than two absences will result in a lowering of a student's discussion section grade. A student's participation grade may also include several small quizzes or assignments.
2. **Exams (90% of final grade):** Three midterm examinations and a final exam will be given throughout the course. The dates for the midterm examinations are listed on the syllabus as **May 15, May 22, and May 29**. These exams will consist of multiple choice and matching questions.

The midterm examinations will be non-cumulative. If a student is unable to take one of the exams on the scheduled date, they should contact the course instructor beforehand. Missed exams will only be excused for a documented illness (documentation must be provided by a physician) or a death in the family. If you are excused from an exam, your final exam will be weighted accordingly.

The final exam is scheduled for **Thursday, May 31**, from 9:30 to 12:15 pm. Like the midterms, it will feature a mix of multiple choice and matching questions. The final exam will be cumulative, covering all materials from readings and lectures. The students' lowest exam grade will be dropped and the remaining three exams will count for 30% each.

Final course grades will be assigned as follows: 100-93 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 77-79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-72 = C-, 60-69 = D, and 60-0. Extra credit assignments will not be given in this course.

**Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to notify the instructor and the Office for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made.

**Instructor Availability:**

Students seeking to contact the instructor are encouraged to stop by during scheduled office hours. Students who are unable to attend office hours should e-mail ahead of time to ensure instructor availability.

**Classroom Behavior:**

Students should behave professionally throughout the course. Due to the large size of the course, disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes cell phone usage, excessive talking and derogatory or offensive comments made during discussion.

**Cheating and Plagiarism:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. It is each student's responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism. Further information regarding academic honesty can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

**Tentative Lecture Outline/Readings Schedule:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignment*</u>
May 9	Introduction/Course Overview	--
May 10	The Logic of American Politics	KJKV 1
May 11	The Constitution/John Adams Episode 2	KJKV 2 Articles of Confederation U.S. Constitution
May 14	Federalism	KJKV 3
<b>May 15</b>	<b>Exam #1</b>	--

May 16	U.S. Congress	KJKV 6
May 17	The Presidency	KJKV 7
May 18	Lincoln Movie	--
May 21	The Judiciary	KJKV 9
<b>May 22</b>	<b>Exam #2</b>	--
May 23	Public Opinion	KJKV 10
May 24	Campaigns and Elections	KJKV 11
May 25	Political Parties	KJKV 12
<b>May 28</b>	<b>Memorial Day—No class</b>	--
<b>May 29</b>	<b>Exam #3</b>	--
May 30	Review/Conclusion	--
<b>May 31**</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	--

\* Readings from Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser and Vavreck are designated “KJKV.”

\*\* The Final Exam is currently scheduled from 9:30am to 12:15 pm in the regular classroom.