

POLS 1101: American Government Fall 2018

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesdays
9:30 AM-11:30 AM and by appointment

Class Schedule

Tuesdays and Thursdays
2:00 PM-2:50 PM
Instructional Plaza S306

Course Description

This course is an introduction to American politics and government. We will explore the origins, development, and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. An introduction to Georgia politics will also be provided. Whenever possible, we will use historical or current political issues and events to better explain the functions of government. Using a combination lectures, discussions, and experiential learning, the course seeks to give students a better understanding and appreciation of the American political process.

Required Book

The following books are required and should be available at the campus bookstore:

Bianco, William T. and David T. Canon. 2017. *American Politics Today*, 5th
Essentials Edition. W.W. Norton and Company.

An Ebook version of this text is available at:

https://digital.wwnorton.com/amerpoltoday5ess?_ebook.

In addition to the books, reading the news on a daily basis will be important for this course. The New York Times (www.nytimes.com) and the Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com) are two excellent sources of news on politics and government. There are many other great sources of political news.

Course Grading

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

1. **Discussion Section** (10% of final grade): Students are required to attend a discussion section held every Friday. Each section will be taught by one of the six teaching assistants. You are expected to participate, not just attend, during Friday discussion sections. This means that you need to be ready to discuss the readings or participate in the activity for that week. Your teaching assistant will keep track of attendance and participation grades in each of the discussion sections.
2. **Midterm Exams** (60% of final grade): Three midterm examinations (worth 20% each) will be given throughout the course. The dates are listed on the syllabus as

September 11, October 9, and November 8. These exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Exams will cover material from both the course readings and lectures. The midterm examinations will be non-cumulative.

3. **Final Exam** (30% of final grade): The final exam is scheduled for December 11, from 3:30PM to 6:30PM. Like the midterms, it will feature a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will be cumulative, covering all materials from readings and lectures.

If a student is unable to take one of the exams on the scheduled date, they should contact their TA or the course instructor beforehand. Missed exams will only be excused in the most extraordinary circumstances (death in the family, documented illnesses, acts of God, etc.) If you receive permission to take an exam at a time other than that listed on the syllabus, I reserve the right to alter the format and substance of the makeup exam (e.g. you may not get the same exam as everyone else).

Course grades will be assigned as follows: 93–100% = A, 90–93% = A-, 87–90% = B+, 83–87% = B, 80–83% = B-, 77–80% = C+, 73–77% = C, 70–73% = C-, 60–70% = D, 0–60% = F.

Other Issues

1. **Disabilities:** Students with disabilities of any kind are strongly encouraged to tell me at the beginning of the semester, so appropriate accommodations can be made. Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services Office will be accommodated according to university policy. Contact Disabilities Services for more information.
2. **Instructor Availability:** I am available to meet with students by appointment if anyone cannot attend my posted office hours. Please email me to schedule a meeting.
3. **Classroom Behavior:** Students should behave professionally throughout the course. Due to the large size of the class, disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Turn off your cell phone while in class (some exceptions may apply - e.g. you a transplant surgeon anxiously awaiting the arrival of a donor heart). Laptops may be used to take notes in class, but not in a way that is disruptive to other students. Texting is never appropriate in class, unless it is to let your friends know that a case concerning the Third Amendment has never been litigated before the Supreme Court, or some similar tidbit of mesmerizing political trivia.
4. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** All course work must meet the standards put forth in the University of Georgia's Student Honor Code. See the Academic Honesty Policy for details on what is expected of you (<https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy/student-honor-code>).

Course Schedule

- Week 1** (8/14 and 8/16 – Intro/Why Government?)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 1
- Week 2** (8/21 and 8/23 – Constitution and Founding)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 2
- Week 3** (8/28 – Federalism, 8/30 – Study Session)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 3
- Week 4** (9/4 and 9/6 – Civil Liberties)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 4
- Week 5** (9/11 – **MIDTERM #1**, 9/13 – Civil Rights)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 5
- Week 6** (9/18 and 9/20 – Public Opinion)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 6
- Week 7** (9/25 and 9/27 – Political Parties)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 7
- Week 8** (10/2 and 10/4 – Elections)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 8
- Week 9** (10/9 – **MIDTERM #2**, 10/11 – Interest Groups)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 9
- Week 10** (10/16 and 10/18 – Congress)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 10
- Week 11** (10/23 and 10/25 – Presidency)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 11
- Week 12** (10/30 – Bureaucracy, 11/1 – Courts)
Bianco and Canon, Chapters 12 and 13
- Week 13** (11/6 – Courts, 11/8 – **MIDTERM #3**)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 13

Week 14 (11/13 and 11/15 – Economic and Social Policy)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 14

Week 15 Thanksgiving Week – No Class

Week 16 (11/27 and 11/29– Foreign Policy)
Bianco and Canon, Chapter 15

Week 17 (12/4 – Final Exam Review)

Week 18 (12/11 – Final Exam, 3:30PM – 6:30PM)