

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

Fall 2016, TuTh 2:00-2:50 pm, Instructional Plaza S306

Instructor: Kristin Garrett

Office: Bank of America Building 419

Office Hours: TuTh 12:00-1:30 pm, or by appointment

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Course Description

This course is a general introduction to American political institutions, political behavior, and the policy process. Over the course of this semester, we will discuss the origins of the current governmental system in America, the structure and function of the U.S. government, and factors that influence citizens' political positions and participation. We will discuss these topics from a historical perspective, as well as in the context of current political events and debates. We will also study similar themes with regard to Georgia's state government and constitution.

Course Objectives

- Introduce students to basic features and principles of American government, which lay a foundation for future learning and good citizenship
- Analyze different facets of the American political system in light of democratic ideals
- Integrate and apply class concepts to current political issues and events
- Strengthen critical thinking and communication skills by encouraging students to consider different political perspectives, to reflect on the development of their own views, and to effectively articulate and respectfully defend their own positions

Required Texts and Technology

- Ken Kollman. 2015. *The American Political System*. Core Second Edition, Election Update. New York: Norton.
- Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie. 2013. *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*. Fourth Custom Edition for the University of Georgia. New York: Pearson.
- Any additional readings will be posted on eLearning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>)
- Top Hat (<http://ctl.uga.edu/top-hat/students>)

Course Requirements and Grading

Midterm Exams (60%)

There will be three midterm exams (worth 20% each), which are scheduled for **September 8**, **October 6**, and **November 3**. Each exam will cover a designated section of course material, including both the course readings and lectures from that section. Additional information about the midterms will be communicated to students before the exams.

Final Exam (25%)

There will be one final exam, which is scheduled for **December 13**, from **3:30-6:30 pm**. This exam will be cumulative, covering material from all readings and lectures throughout the semester. Additional information about the final will be communicated to students in advance of the exam.

Discussion Section (10%)

Discussion sections occur every Wednesday and will be led by one of six teaching assistants (TAs). These sections are small and benefit from student engagement, so attendance is mandatory and participation is expected. TAs will evaluate student learning and engagement for the discussion section grade utilizing different activities, assignments, and assessment tools that they select. There will be a separate syllabus for each discussion section detailing the expectations for that section, which your TA will go over with you at the start of the semester. TAs will keep track of discussion section attendance, and points will be taken off this portion of your grade for more than one unexcused absence.

Discussion section schedule:

Section	Time	Room	Teaching Assistant (TA)	Email
10692	8:00-8:50	MLC 253	Hadley Nobles	hnobles@uga.edu
10693	9:05-9:55	LeConte 135	Laura Ann Prickett	mary.prickett25@uga.edu
10695	9:05-9:55	LeConte 230	Kaitlin Powers	kaitlin.powers@uga.edu
10697	10:10-11:00	Journalism 502	Laura Ann Prickett	mary.prickett25@uga.edu
10698	10:10-11:00	Journalism 505	Kaitlin Powers	kaitlin.powers@uga.edu
10700	11:15-12:05	Journalism 511	Jakub Wondreys	j.wondreys@uga.edu
10702	11:15-12:05	Journalism 502	Neil Williams	snpwill@uga.edu
10703	12:20-1:10	LeConte 230	Ryan Fleming	ryan.fleming@uga.edu
10705	12:20-1:10	Journalism 507	Jakub Wondreys	j.wondreys@uga.edu
10706	1:25-2:15	LeConte 230	Neil Williams	snpwill@uga.edu
10708	1:25-2:15	LeConte 135	Ryan Fleming	ryan.fleming@uga.edu

Lecture Engagement (5%)

Students are expected to attend and actively engage with course lectures. To help facilitate student learning and engagement, we will utilize the Top Hat classroom response system during lectures. This system allows students to submit answers to in-class questions using web-enabled devices and text messaging. You will be asked various multiple choice, short answer, and discussion questions each class period, and Top Hat will keep track of your responses and attendance. Your grade for the lecture engagement portion of the class is based on your attendance and participation in answering questions, not the accuracy of your responses.

Grade Scale

A	93-100	C+	77-80
A-	90-93	C	73-77
B+	87-90	C-	70-73
B	83-87	D	60-70
B-	80-83	F	0-60

Course Guidelines and Resources

Student Responsibilities

In order to succeed in the course, students should come on time to class and ready to contribute to a thriving learning environment. They should actively engage in class lectures and discussion sections, complete assigned readings, and put in the time and effort to study for exams. Finally, they are expected to behave professionally throughout the semester. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Civility and Respect

All conversation in discussion sections and lectures must be civil, reasoned, and respectful of others' opinions. An important component of this course is discussing ideas, issues, and events with peers who

have different political views. Such discussion facilitates learning and sharpens critical thinking skills by exposing students to different perspectives, challenging them to think about their own views, and giving them practice communicating their own positions. For this reason, I want to create a learning environment where you feel comfortable, confident, and excited about sharing your thoughts and applying what you have learned to issues we discuss.

Grades

Grading standards are intended to be high, but fair. If you have any questions or concerns about your grade on an exam or assignment, please set up an appointment to talk with your TA. An issue should only be appealed to the instructor if it cannot be resolved with your TA.

Makeup Exams and Late Assignments

Makeup exams will NOT be allowed except in the case of an excused absence, such as a documented illness, death in the family, or travel for university activities. If you know you are unable to take an exam on the scheduled date, please contact your TA in advance to make alternative arrangements. If you miss an exam due to an emergency situation, please contact your TA as soon as possible after the event to schedule a makeup exam. Documentation of the excused absence is required, and I reserve the right to alter the format and content of the makeup exam.

Late assignments for discussion sections will NOT be accepted unless you have an excused absence. In this case, you must follow the same policy of contacting your TA and showing documentation of your excused absence.

Extra Credit

There are no extra credit assignments in this course. Students are expected to put forth their best effort in the class and to communicate with their TAs and instructor if they are having trouble with the material.

Contact

Please contact your TA or me with any questions or concerns you have this semester. Email is the best way to reach me, and your TAs will let you know the best way to reach them. If you are struggling to understand the course material, please talk to us early in the semester so that we can work together to get things on track before too much time has passed and your grade has suffered.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning, and it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. All course work must meet the standards established in the University of Georgia Academic Honesty Policy. You can access the policy at <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>.

Student Disabilities

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 UGA Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students with registered disabilities will be accommodated according to university policy. If you have documentation for such accommodations from the DRC, please present it to your TA as soon as possible, and please notify the lead instructor if you need additional assistance. For more information, visit <https://drc.uga.edu> or call the DRC at 706-542-8719.

Student Resources

You can increase your chance of success in this course by taking advantage of UGA's academic services. The Division of Academic Enhancement (<http://dae.uga.edu/student-resources/>) provides a range of

resources, including study tips, tutoring, and workshops, to help students develop solid learning strategies. Also, the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.english.uga.edu>) and Miller Learning Center (<http://mlc.uga.edu/>) offer resources to assist students with their research and writing.

eLearning Commons

Additional reading assignments and other documents that are helpful for the course will be posted to the eLearning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>), so you should check in to the course site throughout the semester. You can sign into the eLC using your UGA MyId and password.

Top Hat

Students should register for Top Hat before the first day of class, or as soon as possible after signing up for this course. An invitation to register for Top Hat will be sent to you by email, but if you fail to receive this email, you can register by visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/154139>. Our Course Join Code is 154139. Top Hat requires a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

For more information about how to register for Top Hat, as well as an overview of how to use the system, visit <https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>. If you need assistance with Top Hat at any time, please contact their support team directly by email at support@tophat.com or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

Tentative Schedule*

Date	Class Description	Assigned Reading
Aug. 11	Course Overview	Course Syllabus
Aug. 16	Introduction	Kollman, Ch. 1
Aug. 17	<i>Discussion Section**</i>	NA
Aug. 18	The Constitution 1	Kollman, Ch. 2
Aug. 23	The Constitution 2	Kollman, Ch. 2
Aug. 24	<i>Georgia Constitution</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 4
Aug. 25	Federalism 1	Kollman, Ch. 3
Aug. 30	Federalism 2	Kollman, Ch. 3
Aug. 31	<i>Local Government</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 8
Sept. 1	Civil Rights and Liberties 1	Kollman, Ch. 4
Sept. 6	Civil Rights and Liberties 2	Kollman, Ch. 4
Sept. 7	<i>Voting Rights in Georgia</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 9
Sept. 8	Exam 1 (Ch. 1-4)	NA
Sept. 13	Congress 1	Kollman, Ch. 5
Sept. 14	<i>The Georgia General Assembly</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 5
Sept. 15	Congress 2	Kollman, Ch. 5
Sept. 20	The Presidency 1	Kollman, Ch. 6
Sept. 21	<i>The Executive Branch</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 6
Sept. 22	The Presidency 2	Kollman, Ch. 6
Sept. 27	The Bureaucracy	Kollman, Ch. 7
Sept. 28	<i>Education Policy in Georgia</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 14
Sept. 29	The Judiciary 1	Kollman, Ch. 8
Oct. 4	The Judiciary 2	Kollman, Ch. 8
Oct. 5	<i>The Judicial System</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 7
Oct. 6	Exam 2 (Ch. 5-8)	NA
Oct. 11	Public Opinion 1	Kollman, Ch. 9

Oct. 12	<i>Personality and Political Attitudes</i>	TBA
Oct. 13	Public Opinion 2	Kollman, Ch. 9
Oct. 18	Political Participation	Kollman, Ch. 10
Oct. 19	<i>Georgiamanders</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 10
Oct. 20	Elections and Campaigns 1	Kollman, Ch. 13
Oct. 25	Elections and Campaigns 2	Kollman, Ch. 13
Oct. 26	<i>The Electoral Process</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 13
Oct. 27	Political Parties 1	Kollman, Ch. 12
Nov. 1	Political Parties 2	Kollman, Ch. 12
Nov. 2	<i>Political Parties</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 11
Nov. 3	Exam 3 (Ch. 9-10, 12-13)	NA
Nov. 8***	Interest Groups and Social Movements	Kollman, Ch. 11
Nov. 9	<i>Interest Groups</i>	Bullock and Gaddie, Ch. 12
Nov. 10	Post-Election Discussion	TBA
Nov. 15	Mass Media and the Press 1	Kollman, Ch. 14
Nov. 16	<i>Media Effects</i>	TBA
Nov. 17	Mass Media and the Press 2	Kollman, Ch. 14
Nov. 22, 24	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	NA
Nov. 29	Fun Topics from Political Psychology	TBA
Nov. 30	<i>Follow up to Fun Topics</i>	TBA
Dec. 1	Course Recap and Review	NA
Dec. 6	NO CLASS: READING DAY	NA
Dec. 13	Final Exam (3:30-6:30 pm)	NA

* I reserve the right to modify this syllabus and the tentative course schedule. All changes to the syllabus will be clearly communicated in class and posted on eLC.

** Classes in italics refer to discussion sections. Your TA has the right to modify your specific discussion section schedule, so please follow along with the syllabus for your respective discussion section and complete the readings your TA assigns.

*** 2016 presidential election