

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT  
POLS 1105 H  
Fall 2016**

**Instructor:** Professor Hood  
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**Required Reading Materials**

Required Texts (Available at Off-Campus, Baxter Street Books, or Campus Bookstore):

- *The Logic of American Politics*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (978-1-4833-1984-1) [KJKV]
- *Why the Electoral College is Bad for America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (978-0300166491) [E]

Other Readings:

- Excerpts from *Checks and Balances? How A Parliamentary System Could Change American Politics* [M&C]
- *U.S. Constitution* [C] (Appendix 3 in KJKV)

**Course Overview**

Students will gain a more complete understanding of the basic organization and functions of the United States and Georgia governments through a series of assigned readings and lectures. Emphasis will be placed on learning basic concepts and ideas concerning how our government actually works (or fails to work). After successfully completing this course you will hopefully be able to comprehend, and meaningfully participate in, the American political process.

In addition to covering the *basics* of the American political system, two additional themes will be examined in greater detail:

- The unique structure of the U.S. political system and resulting consequences
- Presidential elections and the electoral college

Monday and Wednesday meetings will normally be reserved for lectures on general topical areas, while Friday sessions will be used to focus on the themes outlined above. Students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to the class meeting and be prepared to engage in a discussion of the topic at hand.

**Course Requirements/Expectations**

**Exams:** You are expected to take all three of the regularly scheduled exams as well as the final. The grade earned on the final exam, in addition to counting for the assigned 16% of a student's grade, may also be substituted for the lowest grade earned from Exams 1-3. In the event that a student misses one of the exams scheduled during the semester (Exams 1-3), the normal procedure will be to substitute the final exam grade (Exam 4) for the missed exam.

**Essays:** Students will be required to complete two essays during the course of the semester. The first will focus on the structure of the U.S. system of government and will directly relate to our Friday discussions of *Checks and Balances? How A Parliamentary System Could Change American Politics*. The second essay will be centered on the presidential election system in the United States. For this segment of the course we will be reading and discussing George Edwards' book *Why the Electoral College is Bad for America*. More detailed information concerning these

assignments will be posted on ELC. Due dates for these assignments are in the Course Outline section.

*Participation:* Your grade in this area will be based on attendance and participation in class as well as periodic quizzes related to course readings as the need may arise. One should note that it is difficult to participate in class discussions without being physically present. Class attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a high participation grade. Students should also note that I consider being tardy equivalent to being absent. Translation: Get to class on time. In order to adequately prepare for class, all assigned readings should be examined by the dates indicated on this syllabus. Not all assigned readings may be discussed in class; however this does not negate your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these materials.

### **Grading Procedure**

Your course grade will be based on the following distribution:

- |                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ Exams         | 16% each (4) <sup>1</sup> |
| ▪ Essays        | 16% each (2) <sup>2</sup> |
| ▪ Participation | 4%                        |

Grading Scale:

<60: F; 60-69: D; 70-72: C-; 73-76: C; 77-79: C+; 80-82: B-; 83-86: B; 87-89: B+; 90-92: A-; 93-100: A

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<sup>1</sup>Makeup exams are not given.

<sup>2</sup>Failure to turn in the research paper on time will result in a penalty of one letter grade per day (including weekends); no exceptions.

**Course Outline<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>
8/12	Course Introduction	
8/15	Why do we need government?	KJKV, Ch. 1
8/17	Obstacles to Collective Action	KJKV, Ch. 1
8/19	The U.S. and Georgia Constitutions	KJKV, Ch. 2; C, Articles V & VII
8/22	The U.S. and Georgia Constitutions Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 2
8/24	Federalism	KJKV, Ch. 3; C, Article VI, Article I, Section 8, 10 <sup>th</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup> Amendments
8/26	The American System—Too Unresponsive?	M&C, Ch. 1
8/29	Federalism Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 3
8/31	Comparing the American and British Systems	M&C, Ch. 2
9/2	<b>Exam 1</b>	
9/5	<b>Labor Day Holiday</b>	
9/7	Public Opinion	KJKV, Ch. 10
9/9	The Contract with America	M&C, Ch. 3
9/12	Public Opinion Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 10
9/14	The Role of the Media	KJKV, Ch. 14
9/16	The Founders' Viewpoint	Readings from the <i>Federalist Papers</i> [Electronic]
9/19	The Role of the Media Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 14
9/21	Political Parties	KJKV, Ch. 12
9/23	Reform Ideas for the American System	M&C, Ch. 5
9/26	Political Parties Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 12
9/28	<b>Exam 2</b>	
9/30	<b>Essay 1 Due;</b> Discussion of Your Counterfactuals	

<sup>3</sup>I reserve the right to make minor modifications to this schedule throughout the semester as the need may arise.

10/3	Campaigns and Elections	KJKV, Ch. 11; C, 15 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> , and 26 <sup>th</sup> Amendments
10/5	Campaigns and Elections Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 11
10/7	Raising Question; How the Electoral College Works	E, Chs. 1-2
10/10	Interest Groups Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 13
10/12	Interest Groups	KJKV, Ch. 13
10/14	The Electoral College and Political Equality	E, Ch. 3
10/17	The Legislatures—U.S./Georgia <b>Midpoint Withdrawal Deadline (10/18)</b>	KJKV, Ch. 6
10/19	Legislatures—U.S./Georgia	KJKV, Ch. 6; C, Article I
10/21	Contingent Elections	E, Ch. 4
10/24	<b>Exam 3</b>	
10/26	The Executive—The President/The Georgia Governor	KJKV, Ch. 7; C, Article II, 22 <sup>nd</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> Amendments
10/28	<b>Fall Break</b>	
10/31	The Executive—The President/The Georgia Governor Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 7
11/2	Presidential Primaries and Elections	Electronic Readings
11/4	Video Presentation: Presidential Elections	
11/7	Video Presentation: Presidential Elections	
11/9	The Bureaucracy	KJKV, Ch. 8
11/11	The Origins of the Electoral College	E, Ch. 5
11/14	The Bureaucracy Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 8
11/16	The Judicial Branch—U.S./Georgia	KJKV, Ch. 9; C, Article III
11/18	Protecting Interests	E, Ch. 6
11/21-25	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	
11/28	The Judicial Branch—U.S./Georgia Cont.	KJKV, Ch. 9
11/30	Maintaining Cohesion	E, Ch. 7
12/2	Preserving the Party System; Conclusion	E, Chs. 8-9
12/5	<b>Last Day of Class; Essay 2 Due;</b> Discussion of Your Essays	
12/12	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> (Exam 4); 12:00-2:00 p.m.	