

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

Meeting times: Monday and Wednesday, 9:05-9:55am

Room: Instructional Plaza/S306

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 Mondays and Wednesdays. Please note that section attendance is mandatory. All sections take place on Fridays.

Sect.	Time	Place	Instructor	Email
21544	8:00-8:50	Psychology 309	Brittany Linn Cleveland	brittany.cleveland25@uga.edu
21548	9:05-9:55	Psychology 309	Brittany Linn Cleveland	brittany.cleveland25@uga.edu
21555	9:05-9:55	Journalism 513	Aman Bekmagambetov	aman@uga.edu
21545	10:10-11:00	Psychology 111	Aman Bekmagambetov	aman@uga.edu
21558	10:10-11:00	Journalism 513	Simon Williamson	simon.williamson25@uga.edu
21537	11:15-12:05	Psychology 309	Simon Williamson	simon.williamson25@uga.edu
21550	11:15-12:05	Psychology 111	Meredith Bennett	msb37@uga.edu
21568	12:20-1:10	Journalism 513	Meredith Bennett	msb37@uga.edu
21552	12:20-1:10	Psychology 309	Brianna Roberts Yoder	brr32090@uga.edu
21563	1:25-2:15	Park Hall 116	Brianna Roberts Yoder	brr32090@uga.edu
21566	1:25-2:15	Journalism 513	Tara Trask	tet61@uga.edu

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 Monday, February 26th, from 9:05-09:55am.*

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 Monday, April 30th 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 can find their website here: <https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople11ess>). 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 **45667** for section 21544 from 8:00am to 8:50am (TA Brittany Linn Cleveland)

Student Set ID is **45668** for section 21548 from 9:05 to 9:55am (TA Brittany Linn Cleveland)

Student Set ID is **45687** for section 21555 from 9:05 to 9:55am (TA Aman Bekmagambetor)

Student Set ID is **45688** for section 21545 from 10:10am to 11am (TA Aman Bekmagambetor)

Student Set ID is **45691** for section 21558 from 10:10am to 11am (TA Simon Williamson)

Student Set ID is **45692** for section 21537 from 11:15am to 12:05pm (TA Simon Williamson)

Student Set ID is **45693** for section 21550 from 11:15am to 12:05pm (TA Meredith Bennett)

Student Set ID is **45694** for section 21568 from 12:20pm to 1:10pm (TA Meredith Bennett)

Student Set ID is **45695** for section 21552 from 12:20pm to 1:10pm (TA Brianna Roberts Yoder)

Student Set ID is **45696** for section 21563 from 1:25pm to 2:15pm (TA Brianna Roberts Yoder)

Student Set ID is **45705** for section 21566 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	79-77 C+	63-60 D-
93-90 A-	76-74 C	59-0 F
89-87 B+	73-70 C-	
86-84 B	69-67 D+	
83-80 B-	66-64 D	

******Please note that there is no standard rounding policy. Rounding decisions can be made on a case-by-case basis and are largely determined by your TA.******

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/academichonesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Course Schedule

Please note that there is no breakout session on Friday, January 5th 2018.

First Week: January 8th and 10th

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: January 12th)

Second Week: January 17th (No class on the 15th due to MLK Day)

Topic: The Founding and the Constitution

Readings: Chapter 2 in "We The People" & The Constitution of the United States of America pp.A11-A23.

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: January 19th)

Third Week: January 22nd and 24th

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: January 26th)

Fourth Week: January 29th and 31st

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: February 2nd)

Fifth Week: February 5th and 7th

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: February 9th)

Sixth Week: February 12th and 14th

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 February 16th)

Seventh Week: February 19th and 21st

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: February 23rd)

Eighth Week: February 26th and 28th (Midterm on the 26th)

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: March 2nd)

Ninth Week: March 5th and 7th

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: March 9th)

Tenth Week: March 12th and 14th

Topic: The Importance of Spring Break

Potential Short Paper Topic: Explain why Spring Break is a necessity for college students. (Due: Never)

Eleventh Week: March 26th and 28th

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*

Potential Short Paper Topic: Read <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/04/gsa-employees-spend-taxpayer-money-in-vegas/>. Can large bureaucratic organizations like the U.S. General Services Administration ever run effectively? Explain your answer in terms of the discussion of bureaucracy in the textbook. (Due: March 30th)

Twelfth Week: March 19th and 21st

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: March 23rd)

Thirteenth Week: April 2nd and 4th

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: April 6th)

Fourteenth Week: April 9th and 11th

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: April 13th)

Fifteenth Week: April 16th and 18th

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: April 20th)

Sixteenth Week: April 23rd and 25th

Topic: Conclusion, Review, and Preparation for Final Exam