**POLSCI 1101E: Introduction to American Government Syllabus**

Fall 2018

Tentative syllabus

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**Virtual Office Hours**: 11 am to 12 pm on WF and by appointment; I will be available to you via our course online chat room, eLC message pager if I am on eLC, email, and Skype via appointment, and by phone during work hours. You may email me any time. But keep in mind that I will certainly respond as quickly as I can, and no later than 24 hours from the time of contact. (Important: if I send you an email via elc class list if you reply it will not get to me. Always change the email for me to [polaah@uga.edu](mailto:polaah@uga.edu) and it will get to me or email me through eLC, but do not reply only.)

**Course Description:** This course is concerned with government and politics in the United States, primarily at the national level, but attention will be given to state and local government, particularly the nature of Georgia’s Constitution. We will examine the institutional rules and human behaviors that shape government, the operation of elections, the development of parties and interest groups, public opinion, and the functioning of Congress, the presidency, and the courts. We will look at civil rights and liberties and explore some policy areas.

We will also focus our attention on current political, social and economic events and discuss how they relate to the governmental concepts we will be studying. During this time we will also discuss a variety of theories of, and perspectives on government. At times, I will post news articles or bits of information on the discussion board and your thoughts are welcome and expected.

Specific topics and the time at which they will be covered, as well as your assigned reading can be found on the calendar on this course’s eLC portal.

**Prerequisites of the Course:** None, but please have plenty of interest, an open mind, a good work ethic.

**Technical requirements of the course:** If you are able to access the Internet on a regular basis, you meet the technical requirements for the course. It is important that you have reliable Internet service, particularly as the tests are time sensitive.

**Course objectives**:

After you have completed this course you should be able to:

* Explain why we form governments, and ,in particular, how our own U.S. government came into being.
* Identify “who decides” in American government.
* Discuss the form of government that was created by the Constitution, particularly the novel creation of federalism.
* Explain how federalism balances state and federal power in the U.S.
* Diagram the three branches of government and explain their functions and the checks and balances that the Framers created to balance the powers of each.
* Describe the fundamental liberties within the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment.
* Describe the advance of civil rights in the U.S. as well as the groups which have sought them.
* Explain the genesis and impact of public opinion on the American political system.
* Describe the ways in which certain institutions, like voting (rules and institutions in elections), parties, interest groups and the media connect us to our institutions of government, and at times influence our attitudes and behavior.
* Explain the impacts the media has on politics, politicians, and elections.
* Explain how Congressional institutional design and rules affects members’ behavior and lawmaking.
* Identify the sources of and limits on presidential power.
* Describe the design and functions of the state and federal court systems in the United States.
* Describe the role of state and local government within federalism.
* Describe the development and operations of the federal bureaucracy.
* Identify types of domestic policy in the US, as well as the actors and settings which shape is formation.
* Identify major approaches to foreign policy in the United States, as well as the actors and settings which shape its formation.
* Explore and understand the different components of Georgia’s state government (executive, legislative, and judicial) as well as the history and development of the Georgia Constitution).
* Put oneself into the picture and determine why government should matter to you.

**Course textbook:** We are using a new platform called Open Now. The platform contains all the materials we need, including the e-text. **There is no cost to you for the text or access to the platform given this is a beta-test of the materials.**

**Online Learning Environmen**t: This course is hosted on UGA eLC. If you have any issues at any point, make sure to contact:

EITS Help Desk: helpdesk@uga.edu or 706.542.3106.

Business hours are 8am - 10pm (Mon-Thurs), 8am-6pm (Fri), and 1pm-7pm (Sat-Sun)

Go the University System of Georgia Desire2Learn Online Help Center at http://D2Lhelp.view.usg.edu. From this site, you can search the Knowledge Base, browse popular articles, or click the link for live support (24x7x365) in the scrolling news area.

**Grading and Assignments**:

Your grade for this course will be determined by your scores on your concept quizzes, tests, essays, and your participation via the discussion board. Each counts toward a percentage of your grade. To see the distribution of weight for each assessment, simply go to the Grades link on the course page and review the list of assessments and their individual and group weights.

**Learning Activities and Course Schedule**: In this course you will work at your own pace, but rule will be that you MUST complete at least one module per week. You may choose either the domestic or the foreign policy module, but are not required to do both. And you must complete the Georgia politics module as well. You must complete all concept quizzes and exams. I will have all of this laid out for you as soon as possible.

**Policies**: This course follows all policies related to Academic Honesty and Student Code of Conduct as outlined by the University of Georgia.

<http://www.conduct.uga.edu/code_of_conduct/codeofconduct.pdf>

<http://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Make sure that you have read these policies.

**Agreement**: By enrolling in this course, you agree to adhere to these policies linked above and to do your best to be a good, productive, and **honest** student. You also agree to work with Dr. Haynes to make sure that you have a positive learning experience and a rewarding course outcome and that **you will not neglect to stay on top of your work**. ***Nor will you interact with your peers to collaborate on any exams, essays or projects unless they are clearly designated as group projects or work.***

All other materials are housed on the course page in eLC.

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