

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Politics

MWF 10:10-11:00am

Baldwin Hall 302

Office Hours: Fridays 3pm-4pm or by appointment

Office: Baldwin Hall Room 101W

Course Description: This course is an introduction to American government and policy. The focus in this course will be on a review of American government institutions as well as contemporary application of this information to our current political climate. The main goal of this course is for students to leave this class with an increased understanding of how the past political actions and events have led to our present political environment. This is a political science course, so students will be introduced to political science research, both foundational and contemporary. Students will also be asked to explore a variety of opinions on social policy in an effort to become more familiar with some policy issues focused upon by politicians.

Course Objectives:

- To build a foundational knowledge of political action taken by historical figures, using American government as the case study.
- To apply the knowledge of American political institutions, introduced in this class to similar institutions in other countries.
- To cultivate a greater familiarity with the scientific study of politics through the exposure to some new and old political science research.
- To create a better familiarity with the development of American political institutions.
- To provide students with exposure to policy creation, through the requirement of drafting and defending policies.
- To recognize differences and similarities between national and Georgia political history.

Required Textbook(s):

Kollman, Ken. 2019. *The American Political System* (Core 3rd Edition, 2018 Update).

Supplemental readings listed on the syllabus and/or placed on eLc.

Class Expectations:

1. Show up to class every class day, prepared.
2. Turn in assignments on time.
3. Be respectful of your other classmates.
4. Ask questions.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation/Attendance/Homework/eLc Quizzes	30%
3 Examinations	50% Total
• Midterm 1	15%
• Midterm 2	15%
• Final Exam	20%
Bill Assignment	10% each
• Bill Draft	

• Group Opposition Presentation	
---------------------------------	--

Participation: In this class, participation is important. There are a variety of different options for participation ranging from in class verbal participation to electronic submission of questions about the material you have read for class. Attendance will also be factored into your participation grade. Absence from more than **three** class meetings will result in a 5% decrease in your final grade in the class. There will also be Georgia politics quizzes on eLc that count towards your participation grade in this class.

Critical Thinking Questions: Part of your participation grade will be answering some critical thinking questions. These questions will be answered through eLc. They will be assigned on Friday afternoon and will be due Sunday night at 11:59pm. There will be at most 5 critical analysis question sets assigned over the course of the semester. More details on these questions will be included later in class.

Writing Assignments and Assessments:

Bill Writing Assignment: This is a multi-week assignment involving the construction of a student’s own bill on a civil rights or liberty issue area. Depending on what the class decides, the student will then have to draft an argument in opposition their bill, as a presidential staff member. In a group, the students will deliver this argument against a civil rights or liberties bill. More details will be provided later in the class.

Pay it Forward Assignment: This assignment is for you to take what you have learned in the class and create something that will help students in the future understand a topic from the class better. More details will be provided on this assignment later in the semester. Students will be expected to present their idea to the rest of the class and this will count towards your participation grade in this class.

Regular Course Exams: There will be three exams during the regular part of the semester to assess your understanding of the material introduced. You will be given three exams, including the final exam. The structure of the exams will be elaborated on, in class, before each exam. **For all exams, blue books and/or scantrons will be provided to the students in class, so no need to purchase testing materials in advance.** All exams must be completed in either pencil or in black pen. All exams will be returned within two weeks of their completion. You must schedule a makeup exam within a week of its assigned time. If you are going to miss an exam let the instructor know at least a week prior to the exam. The final in this class is cumulative. This exam will take place at a time and place scheduled by the University.

Extra Credit: There will be one extra credit opportunity during the semester. Attending the Constitution Day lecture in the UGA Chapel is that opportunity. If you are unable to make it to this event, you can read an excerpt of the speaker’s book posted on eLc. To earn extra credit for either assignment, you must write a 1-2 page paper response to the lecture or article. This extra credit will count towards your participation and attendance percentage, raising it by 5 points. This will be the only extra credit offered in this class.

Academic Integrity Policy

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Any violations of the academic integrity policy will result in a zero on the assignment and a report to the Academic Honesty Office. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Disability Accommodation Policy

Students desiring disability accommodations should consult the [Disability Resource Center](#) and should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Tentative Class Schedule: Any of these readings or due dates can be changed at any time during the course. Changes will be communicated to students via email or during class.

Week and Subject	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 1: Introduction August 12	No Class	First Day of Class	Read Mansbridge article “What is Political Science For?” excerpt
Week 2: Introduction August 19	Read Chapter 1	Read Chapter 1, cont.	Read Pitkin excerpt from <i>The Concept of Representation</i>
Week 3: Founding August 26	Read Chapter 2	Read Chapter 2, cont.	Read Dahl excerpt from <i>How Democratic is the American Constitution?</i> , First Critical Analysis Question Set
Week 4: Federalism September 2	Labor Day-No Class	Read Chapter 3	Read Chapter 3, cont.
Week 5: Civil Liberties and Rights September 9	Read Hammons “State Constitutions, Religious Protection, and Federalism” excerpt	Read Chapter 4, Assign the bill assignment	Read Chapter 4, cont., Second Critical Analysis Question Set
Week 6: Civil Liberties & Rights, cont. & Exam 1 September 16	Guest Speaker: Dr. Alan Taylor, The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, Constitution Day	Read Lewis excerpt from <i>The Rights Turn in Conservative Christian Politics: How Abortion Transformed the Culture Wars</i>	Exam 1
Week 7: Congress September 23	Read Chapter 5 Extra Credit Due	Read Chapter 5, cont.	Bill In-Class Discussion, Assign groups for Opposition Presentations
Week 8: Presidency September 30	Read Chapter 6	Read Chapter 6, cont.	Read Robin excerpt from <i>The Reactionary Mind: Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Donald Trump</i>
Week 9: Judiciary October 7	Opposition Presentations	Read Chapter 8	Read Chapter 8, cont.
Week 10: Judiciary, cont. and Public Opinion	Read George and Epstein article, “On the Nature of	Read Chapter 9	Read Chapter 9, cont.

October 14	Supreme Court Decision-Making” excerpt		
Week 11: Political Parties October 21	Read Chapter 12	Read Chapter 12, cont.	Read Burrell Women in Political Parties chapter section, Third Critical Analysis Question Set
Week 12: Political Parties, cont. and Exam 2 October 28	Read Kollman “Who Drives the Party Bus?” and Schickler excerpt of <i>Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism</i>	Exam 2	Fall Break, No Class
Week 13: Film, & Elections November 4	Begin watching TBD	Continue watching TBD	Read Chapter 13, worksheet due
Week 14: Elections cont. and Georgia Voting November 11	Read Chapter 13, cont.	Read <i>Shelby County v. Holder</i> (2013) and discuss in class its relevance to Georgia Politics	Read NYT article on Georgia election laws
Week 15: Political Participation November 18	Read Chapter 10	Read Chapter 10, cont.	Read Allcott and Gentzkow excerpt from “Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election”, Fourth Critical Analysis Question Set
Week 16 November 25	Work on Pay it Forward Assignment, no more than 2 hours work on this assignment	Thanksgiving Break- No Class	Thanksgiving Break-No Class
Week 17: Review December 2	Pay it Forward Assignment presentations	Finish up the class	No Class
Week 18: Final Exam, Monday, December 9 th 8am-11am			