

POLS 1101S: Introduction to American Government with Service-Learning
University of Georgia
Fall 2019

Instructor:

Dr. Brittany Bramlett

bbram@uga.edu

Office meeting times:

Before / after class

Or by appointment

Class meets:

Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, 8:00am to 8:50am, Baldwin Hall, 0102

Course description

This course aims to introduce students to the foundations and organization of American government through service-learning.

First, we will cover the beginnings of American government through examining the Constitution and the challenges faced by the Founders. For the next part of the course, we will learn about the formal institutions in American government and the interaction between these branches. We will then broaden our definition of government institutions and consider the role of informal institutions (media, political parties and interest groups). Finally, we will look at how the electorate responds to and fits into the American system of government. Throughout the course, we'll also cover similar topics related to Georgia state government.

Course objectives

Students will:

- Study the origins and workings of American government
- Analyze American government, considering democratic ideals
- Develop a working knowledge of current events in American politics
- Learn the course material by working individually and as a team through service-learning
- Improve critical thinking and communication skills by considering various political perspectives, reflecting on the development of personal views, and communicating those views effectively

Course texts

You are required to gain access to the three books listed below. They are available at the campus bookstore.

- *American Government: Roots and Reform* (2016 Presidential Edition), Karen O'Connor & Larry J. Sabato (**older versions are fine!**)
- *A More Perfect Constitution*, Larry J. Sabato.
- *Georgia Politics in a State of Change* (2nd Edition), Charles S. Bullock and Ronald Gaddie.

Other assigned readings will be made available to you via E-Learning Commons

(<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>)

¹ Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed.

Assignments and grading

Attendance and participation (10%)

I take attendance every class mostly so I learn students names but also to have a record of absences. It's important to attend class for your own benefit. Additionally, your peers and instructor value your presence as well. You are allowed two unexcused absences, no questions asked. However, after two absences, I begin to deduct points from your attendance and participation grade. If you are not present, you cannot participate. If you have doctor's notes, you can send them my way for excused absences.

Short quizzes (5% each, 40% total)

Anything from the assigned readings and discussed during class up to the first exam is considered fair game to show up on the exam.

Service-learning reflection (25% total)

(3 shorter written reflections, 5% each, final reflection, 10%)

Reflection is a critical component of service-learning. Students will be asked to do this individually, by responding to a written prompt, and collectively, through class roundtable discussions. Each individual will complete 3 short written reflections, and one longer final written reflection. The three shorter written reflections should be completed by the next class after each group's service-learning activities.

Service-learning team participation and assignments (25% total)

Each student will be assigned to 1 of 3 groups which will be responsible for planning and completing 3 different service-activities during the semester. The targeted audience for our service-learning includes University of Georgia students. Our focus is voter education. We will partner with Dr. Glas's POLS 1101 class (11amT/TR), developing and presenting voter education information materials for our peers in their breakout sessions for 8 Fridays over the semester. The final activity is a tabling event for all students involved in this voter education effort, but Group 3 will take responsibility for planning it and executing it. MANY MORE DETAILS TO COME!!!

Administrative Items

ELearning

You will submit writing assignments and locate additional reading assignments for our class via the ELearning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>). You should sign into the ELearning Commons using your UGA MyId and password. If you are registered for the class, the course link should show up on your ELearning Commons homepage. I may post additional documents useful for your class, so you will want to check in throughout the semester.

Missed deadlines

If you have a conflict with a due date or will miss class repeatedly, please come talk to me about it as soon as you know about it. This way we can work something out and your grade may not suffer. If you have an emergency conflict (i.e. personal, family or medical emergencies), you should e-mail me within the week of the missed due date to discuss the timely completion of the assignment. Documentation is required for make-up exams. If you miss a deadline for a non-emergency, most assignments can still be completed and will be accepted for up to a week—but they will be penalized a letter grade for every additional day late.

Classroom safety

If the fire alarm sounds, we will exit the building and reassemble across the street (Jackson) to make sure everyone exited the building. If there is a tornado warning, we will move downstairs to shelter and account for everyone. If you have concerns about other emergencies or if you have special circumstances that I need to know about in case of an emergency, please speak to me after class. If you have questions about evacuation locations or shelter locations, contact OEP (Office of Emergency Preparedness).

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. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>

UGA culture of honesty policy

The policy is in place to encourage academic honesty among students, faculty and other members of the university community. You and I are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating and much more. It's in your best interest to understand what constitutes dishonest work, as defined by the University. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F for the course, and their names will be forwarded to the University. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Tentative Course Outline

Week 1.

Wednesday, August 14

- Course syllabus
- *Roots & Reform 1* (Introduction)

Friday, August 16

- *Roots & Reform 2* (The Constitution)
- *Georgia Politics 4*

Week 2.

Monday, August 19

- *Roots & Reform 12* (Voting & participation)
- Practice quiz

Wednesday, August 21

- Class discussion & reflection (engagement & knowledge)

Friday, August 23

- Service-learning projects introduction
- Quiz 1

Week 3.

Monday, August 26

- *Roots & Reform 3* (Federalism)

Wednesday, August 28

- *Roots & Reform 4* (Liberties)

Friday, August 30

- Service-learning projects

Week 4.

Monday, September 2 – Labor Day, No Classes

Wednesday, September 4

- *Roots & Reform 5* (Civil rights)

Friday, September 6

- Service-learning projects – group 1 in field

Week 5.

Monday, September 9

- Class discussion & reflection – Rights & voting
- Quiz 2

Wednesday, September 11

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress)

Friday, September 13

- Service-learning projects – group 2 in field

Week 6.

Monday, September 16

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress)
- *Georgia Politics 5*

Wednesday, September 18

- Class discussion & reflection – Congress & voting

Friday, September 20

- Service-learning projects
- Quiz 3

Week 7.

Monday, September 23

- *Roots & Reform 7* (Presidency)

Wednesday, September 25

- *Roots & Reform 7* (Presidency)
- *Georgia Politics 6*

Friday, September 27

- Service-learning projects – group 3 in field

Week 8.

Monday, September 30

- Class discussion & reflection – Presidency & voting

Wednesday, October 2

- *Roots & Reform 8* (Bureaucracy)

Friday, October 4

- Service-learning projects – group 1 in field

Week 9.

Monday, October 7

- *Roots & Reform* 9 (Judiciary)
- *Georgia Politics* 7

Wednesday, October 9

- Class discussion & reflection – Courts & voting
- Quiz 4

Friday, October 11

- Service-learning projects – group 2 in field

Week 10.

Monday, October 14

- *Roots & Reform* 14 (Media)

Wednesday, October 16

- Class discussion & reflection – Media literacy & voting)

Friday, October 18

- Service-learning projects
- Quiz 5

Week 11.

Monday, October 21

- *Roots & Reform* 15 (Interest groups)

Wednesday, October 23

- *Roots & Reform* 11 (Parties)

Friday, October 25

- Service-learning projects – group 3 in field

Week 12.

Monday, October 28

- *Roots & Reform* 12 & 13 (Campaigns & elections)

Wednesday, October 30

- *Roots & Reform* 12 & 13 (Campaigns & elections)

Friday, November 1 – Fall Break, No Classes

Week 13.

Monday, November 4

- Class discussion & reflection – Campaigns & elections & voting
- Quiz 6

Wednesday, November 6

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Public opinion)

Friday, November 8

- Service-learning projects – group 1 in field

Week 14.

Monday, November 11

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Political socialization)

Wednesday, November 13

- Class discussion & reflection – political socialization
- Quiz 7

Friday, November 15

- Service-learning projects – group 2 in field

Week 15.

Monday, November 18

- Service-learning projects

Wednesday, November 20

- Tabling event – group 3 in the field

Friday, November 22

- In-class debates

Week 16.

Monday, November 25

- Individual reflections

Thanksgiving Break (Wednesday, November 20 – Friday, November 23)

Week 17.

Monday, December 2

- In-class reflection
- Quiz 8

Wednesday, December 4 (Friday Class Schedule in Effect, Classes End)

- Individual reflections due

Finals period, Friday, December 6 – Thursday, December 12

List of Due Dates

Quiz 1 – Friday, August 23

Quiz 2 – Monday, September 9

Quiz 3 – Friday, September 20

Quiz 4 – Wednesday, October 9

Quiz 5 – Friday, October 18

Quiz 6 – Monday, November 4

Quiz 7 – Wednesday, November 13

Quiz 8 – Monday, December 2

Group 1 in the field Friday, September 6
 Friday, October 4
 Friday, November 8

Group 2 in the field Friday, September 13
 Friday, October 11
 Friday, November 15

Group 3 in the field Friday, September 27
 Friday, October 25
 Wednesday, November 20

Three individual reflections – due during the next class after the field work day (most of the time, the Monday following the Friday breakouts).

Final written reflection – Wednesday, December 4