

POLS 1101 – Introduction to American Government
Class Time: MWF 9:05-9:55am
Instructor: Jeffrey M. Glas, PhD

Contact Information:

Office Hours: Thursdays 1pm – 3pm or by appointment

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Course Prerequisites: None

I. Course Description:

Government and politics impact our lives in many ways. Some are obvious, others almost invisible. The primary goal of this course is to introduce you to the scientific study of politics using the United States as the primary example. To this end the course is designed to provide you with an historical and conceptual background of politics in the United States as well as a scientific perspective for understanding the relationships between different levels and branches of government, the operation of these political institutions, and how citizens interact with government in the United States and the state of Georgia.

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- 1) Understand the constitutional foundations of United States (U.S.) government and how the Constitution sets the stage for political activity in the U.S.
- 2) Identify the different government institutions in the U.S., explain how they interact with each other and *The People* and how these interactions have changed over time.
- 3) Reconcile the opinions of the public and conduct of our elections with the governing actions taken by our representatives in government.
- 4) Evaluate the performance of one of your representatives in government and offer a strategic policy recommendation.
- 5) Understand how our humanity influences democratic politics in the U.S. and abroad.

II. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

(2.1) Textbooks

Kernell, Samuel, et al. *The Logic of American Politics*, 9th edition¹
ISBN: 9781544322995

Bullock, Charles and Ronald Gaddie. *Georgia Politics in a State of Change*, 2nd edition or newer.
ISBN: 9780205864676

¹ Previous editions will definitely suffice. Just keep in mind that the names of the political actors used in textbook examples will be outdated.

(2.2) Exams

There are three exams in this class. Each exam is worth 25% of your grade. These are written exams, so you will need to come to the exam period equipped with a Blue Book and writing utensil. Blue Books are available in the bookstore for purchase but may be procured free of charge at the Student Government Association office on the 1st floor of the Tate Student Center.

(2.3) Assignments, Discussion, and Attendance

Learning is an active exercise. Students at all levels of learning and accomplishment benefit when they are actively engaged with the course material. Your participation is assessed through a combination of attendance, contributions to discussion, activities and quizzes.

(2.4) Exam Schedule and Grade Distribution

First Midterm Exam	25%	February 17 th
Second Midterm Exam	25%	March 23 rd
Third Exam	25%	May 1 st
Attendance/Participation	25%	Daily

(2.5) Grading

All grades (including final grades) will be assigned following the system depicted below. You must earn a C or higher to pass this class. Grades will not be curved.

A	=	94-100	C+	=	78
A-	=	90	C	=	74
B+	=	88	C-	=	70
B	=	84	D	=	60 – 69
B-	=	80	F	≤	59

III. Class Policies

(3.1) Disability Disclosure Statement

Abled-ness should not impede your intellectual development. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about any accommodations you need in the classroom and for exams. We have some amazing resources for you here at UGA. For testing accommodations please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. For more information please check out the DRC’s website (www.uga.drc.edu). The DRC is located at 825 Lumpkin Street (Clark-Howell Hall) and can be contacted by phone at 706.542.8719.

(3.2) Student Athletes

Representing our university in athletics places some unusual scheduling obligations on you. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about your schedule so we can make sure you are able to achieve in the classroom as well as on the field or in the arena.

(3.3) Absences

John Lennon once said, “Life happens while you’re busy making other plans.” Attending class is critical for your success in this class. Participation is a significant portion of your grade and there is a significant amount of course content that we will cover in our class meetings. Absences will be excused for legitimate reasons (and I am a reasonable human being).

Please do not come to class if you are ill. The UGA Health Center (www.uhs.uga.edu) is located at 55 Carlton Street (across the street from Ramsey) and they will provide you with documentation to excuse your absence from class.

(3.4) Makeup Exams

If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero (and passing the class will be unlikely). If you are late to an exam, you must take it in the time that remains when you arrive. Make-up exams are only given to students with legitimate excuses.

(3.5) Missed/Late Assignments

Missed assignments are awarded a grade of zero. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of five points for each calendar day late.

(3.6) Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Violations of the academic dishonesty rules are grounds for receiving an “F” in the course as well as possible expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, please examine the university policy and /or ask the instructor.

(3.7) Problems and Emergencies

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from attending an exam or coming to class, you should contact me (Dr. Glas) as soon as possible.

(3.8) Policy on Disruptive Behavior

- 1) Turn communication devices to silent...or turn them off entirely.
- 2) Be polite during class discussion.

(3.9) Withdraw Policy

Be advised that the last day to withdraw from a course without failing is Friday, March 20th. All students who withdraw after this date will receive a “WF”.

IV. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments²

Week 1 – January 8th and 10th – Thinking about Politics

Introductions and Syllabus

Week 2 – January 13th, 15th, and 17th – The Logic of American Politics

Chapter 1 of *The Logic [of American Politics]*

Josep Colomer’s “The Public Good”

Week 3 – January 22nd, and 24th – The Constitution

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Monday, January 20th – No Classes

Chapter 2 of *The Logic*

Madison’s “Vices of the Political System of the United States”

Federalist #51

Week 4 – January 27th, 29th, and 31st – Federalism

Chapter 3 of *The Logic*

Chapter 4 of *Georgia Politics [in a State of Change]*

Shipan, C.R. and Volden, C., 2012. Policy diffusion: Seven lessons for scholars and practitioners. *Public Administration Review*, 72(6), pp.788-796.

Week 5 – February 3rd, 5th, and 7th – Civil Liberties

Chapter 4 of *The Logic*

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/du_e_process

Week 6 – February 10th, 12th, and 14th – Civil Rights

Chapter 5 of *The Logic*

Chapter 9 of *Georgia Politics*

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/equal_protection

² The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Week 7 – February 17th, 19th, and 21st – Exam 1

Exam 1 will be held on Monday the 17th and you will have a chance to review your exam in in class on Friday the 21st. We will not be meeting for class on Wednesday the 19th.

Week 8 – February 24th, 26th, and 28th – Legislative Politics

Chapter 6 of *The Logic*

Chapter 5 of *Georgia Politics*

David Mayhew’s “Congress: The Electoral Connection” (Selection from)

Richard Fenno’s “U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration”

Week 9 - March 2nd, 4th, and 6th – Executive Politics

Chapter 7 of *The Logic*

Skim Chapter 8 of *The Logic*

Chapter 6 of *Georgia Politics*

Richard Neustadt’s “The Power to Persuade” (Selection from)

Stephen Skowronek’s “The Politics Presidents Make” (Selection from)

Week 10 – March 9th through the 13th – Spring Break

Spring Break – No Classes

March 16th and 20th – Judicial Politics

Chapter 9 of *The Logic*

Chapter 7 of *Georgia Politics*

Federalist #78

Week 11 – March 23rd, 25th, and 27th – Exam 2

Exam 2 will be held on Monday the 23rd and you will have a chance to review your exam in in class on Friday the 27th. We will not be meeting for class on Wednesday the 25th.

Week 12 – March 30th, April 1st, and 3rd – Public Opinion

Chapter 10 of *The Logic*

James Druckman and Lawrence Jacobs’s “Who Governs?” (Selection from)

Week 13 - April 6th, 8th, and 10th – Voting, Campaigns, and Elections

Chapter 11 of *The Logic*

Chapters 13 of *Georgia Politics*

Louis Menand's "The Unpolitical Animal: How Political Science Understands Voters"

Week 14 – April 13th, 15th, and 17th – Political Parties and Interest Groups

Chapters 12 and 13 of *The Logic*

George Washington's Farewell Address

Federalist #10

Week 15 – April 20th, 22nd, and 24th – The Media

Chapter 14 of *The Logic*

Plato's *Republic* (Selection from)

W. Lance Bennett's "News: The Politics of Illusion" (Selection from)

Week 16 – April 27th, 28th, and May 1st – Final Class Meetings and Exam 3

TBD

*** Wednesday, April 29th – Reading Day***

May 1st

Exam 3 will be held on Friday, May 1st at 9am.