

POLS 1105: Introduction to American Government (Honors) Fall 2020

Instructor

Dr. Roberto F. Carlos
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Virtual Office Hours: Tuesday
2:30 PM – 4:00 PM and by appointment

Class Schedule

Tuesday and Thursday in Person
11:10 AM -12:25 PM
Tate Theater (Room 308)

Course Description and Objective

This course examines the political system in the United States. We will explore the origins, development, and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Specifically, the course will focus on broader issues and controversies that surround the study of American politics. As a class, we will analyze the United States' political culture and examine how the basic structure of the American government is set up to take input from individual citizens and interest groups and turn it into policy outcomes. An introduction to Georgia politics will also be provided.

Required Text and Technology

We the People (12th Core 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******

Evaluation

Topic Presentation: You and a partner will complete one in-depth lesson in this course for the class. Topics are listed in the syllabus and match each week's broader theme. Note that the due date of your topic presentation varies according to the issue you are assigned. The class lesson can be presented in any way you see fit to give the rest of the class an in-depth crash course on a relevant topic related to the week's theme. Class presentations should be no shorter than 10 minutes and no longer than 15 minutes. The class presentation will be done at the start of class each Thursday. In addition to making the presentation, you will provide the instructor a written one-page memo on the topic and presentation. Partners will be randomly assigned at the end of week two. *If you have someone you want to work with, let me know by Monday, August 24, 2020. All topics will be randomly assigned.*

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. The paper should be at least three pages (double spaced), and it is due a week after the week's theme, as listed on the syllabus. Also, note that there are only five spots available per topic, and you must sign up by week 3. First come, first served.

Political Campaign Ad: With another three students (a group of four), you will make both a positive and negative political advertisement for a politician running in this year's election. You will be randomly assigned to your political candidate. These 30 second ads will be due at 10:00 am on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of this year. More on this to come. *If you have a group of four ready to go, let me know by Monday, September 1st, 2020, or I will randomly assign you to a group. You have to have a complete group of four to avoid random assignment.*

Midterm: The midterm will primarily consist of short answer essays with varying levels of difficulty. These questions will cover material from the first half of the semester. *The midterm exam will be sent to you on Tuesday, October 13th, 2020, after class. It will be due via email Thursday, October 15th, 2020, before 10:00 am.*

Final Exam: The final exam is not cumulative and will primarily consist of a few multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty and short answer essays. *The exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 1st, from 12:45 PM to 6:00 PM.*

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://ncia.wwnorton.com/inquizitive-wethepeople12core>) You will need to create an account in order to submit your assignments, which are **due every Friday at 6 PM of each week.**

When you create your account, you will be asked for a student set ID, which is linked to the section you choose. Your Student Set ID is **286998**.

Readings and Quizzes: The required readings typically include one chapter of the textbook per week. Additional readings assigned are available electronically on eLC. It is essential that you stay current with these readings to follow along with lectures and participate in discussions in your sections. I would strongly recommend you finish the readings before class. *I will also send out via email unannounced short quizzes (3-5 questions) based on the lectures and assigned readings for that week.*

Class Participation: Please note that attendance is **not** mandatory. This is the case because we want you to stay home if you are feeling sick. **PLEASE STAY HOME IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL.** I will post class notes online, but it is up to you to stay up to date. Of course, the class works better if you are there. Therefore, please do not take advantage of this pandemic to miss class. Additionally, there is still a participation grade of 10%. Participation will primarily be based on your performance when you are in class. There will be group discussions that should demonstrate your critical reflection on the material covered in the course and 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. You can opt-out; I will offer an alternative assignment for you. *The opt-out deadline is November 1st, 2020. Please note that the study will be sent to you late in the semester.*

Grading Breakdown by Percentage:

Final Exam: 20%
Midterm: 20%
Class Presentation: 10%
Response Paper: 10%
Candidate Video: 10%
Quizzes: 5%
Participation: 10%
Weekly InQuizitive Assignments: 10%
Participation in Online Research Study: 5%

Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades

100-94 A; 93-90 A-

89-87 B+; 86-84 B; 83-80 B-

79-77 C+; 76-74 C; 73-70 C-

69-60 D

59-0 F

******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 me.******

Grade Appeals, Incompletes, Late Assignments, and Make-Up Policy: 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 requirements as early as possible in the following semester. Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be presented before 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).

Office Hours: Students who are having difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments are encouraged to come to virtual office hours. 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 missed class. If my office hours do not work for you, please make an appointment via email.

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 can withdraw a student from the class due to excessive absences (see course attendance policy). Please review the policy here: <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/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://honesty.uga.edu/_resources/documents/academic_honesty_policy_2017.pdf

Email Policy: Please give me at least 24 hours to respond to emails on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources: If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services. UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>). If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Coronavirus Information

Face Coverings: Effective July 15, 2020, the University of Georgia—along with all University System of Georgia (USG) institutions—requires all faculty, staff, students and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use is in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area. Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons. Students seeking an accommodation related to face coverings should contact Disability Services at <https://drc.uga.edu/>.

DawgCheck: Please perform a quick symptom check each weekday on DawgCheck—on the UGA app or website—whether you feel sick or not. It will help health providers monitor the health situation on campus: <https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/>

What do I do if I have symptoms? Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>.

What do I do if I am notified that I have been exposed? Students who learn they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 14 days consistent with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Please correspond with your instructor via email, with a cc: to Student Care & Outreach at sco@uga.edu, to coordinate continuing your coursework while self-quarantined. If you develop symptoms, you should contact the University Health Center to make an appointment to be tested. You should continue to monitor your symptoms daily on DawgCheck.

How do I get a test? Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162. UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.

What do I do if I test positive? Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is **required** to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.

Course Schedule

First Week (starting August 20th)

Topic: Introduction to class and The Citizen and the Government

Readings: Chapter 1 in “We the People” & Pitkin, Hanna F.: *The Concept of Representation*

Second Week (starting August 25th)

Topic: The Founding and the Constitution

Readings: Chapter 2 in “We the People” & Dahl, Robert A.: *How Democratic Is the American Constitution?*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 1 and 2 on *Inquizitive*

Third Week (starting September 1st)

Topic: Federalism

Readings: Chapter 3 in “We the People” Also, read

<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 the medical marijuana issue, 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: September 11th)

Fourth Week (September 8th)

Topic: Congress

Readings: Chapter 12 in “We the People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 12 on *Inquizitive*

Fifth Week (starting September 15th)

Topic: Congress

Readings: Mayhew, David R. *The Electoral Connection*

Student Presentation Topic: Reapportionment and the 2020 Census

Potential Short Paper Topic: Look up your representative’s recent voting records and ideological placement (<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes>). Make a list of five issues they voted on, and state whether you would have voted the same way on behalf of your district taking into account your district’s economic and socio-economic characteristics. Justify your decisions. (Due: September 25th)

Sixth Week (starting September 22nd)

Topic: The Presidency

Readings: Chapter 13 in “We the People” Also, read

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/08/this-is-whats-most-shocking-about-the-resistance-op-ed/>

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 13 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: Executive Orders

Seventh Week (starting September 29th)

Topic: The Bureaucracy

Readings: Chapter 14 in “We the People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 14 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: How did the Department of Homeland Security come to be and what are the pros and cons of creating this type of bureaucratic agency.

Potential Short Paper Topic: Consider President Trump’s travel ban. Explain why you think the president should or should not have the power to act on this issue. In your answer, discuss the reaction of the international community to the travel ban as well as its impact on America’s image abroad. (Due: October 9th)

Eighth Week (starting October 6th)

Topic: The Federal Courts

Readings: Chapter 15 in “We the People” & Rosenberg, Gerald, N. *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring about Social Change?*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 15 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: Are the courts an equal branch?

Ninth Week (starting October 13th, Midterm October 13th)

Topic: Participation, and Elections

Readings: Chapter 8 in “We the People” & Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler: *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 8 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: What factors explain the levels of voter turnout in the United States and should we be worried?

Potential Short Paper Topic: Write a list of reasons individuals may not vote. Examine the role of personal motivation as well as institutional barriers in your answer and propose possible strategies to increase turnout. (Due: October 23rd)

Tenth Week (starting October 20th)

Topic: Political Parties

Readings: Chapter 9 in “We the People” & Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes: *The American Voter: An Abridgement*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 9 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: Why do third parties fail to gain traction in the United States?

Eleventh Week (starting October 27th)

Topic: Campaigns and Elections

Readings: Chapter 10 in “We the People” & Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels: *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 10 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: Early Primaries States and the nomination process

Twelfth Week (starting November 3rd)

Topic: Public Opinion

Readings: Chapter 6 in “We the People” & Mason, Lilliana: *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 6 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: Explain Public Opinion Polling (are we over reliant on polling?)

Thirteenth Week (starting November 10th)

Topic: Interest Groups

Readings: Chapter 11 in “We the People”. Also, read:

<https://themonkeycage.org/2013/05/shadow-lobbyists-and-the-revolving-door-or-what-anthony-weiner-and-newt-gingrich-have-in-common/>

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 11 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: 527 and Super PACs

Fourteenth Week (starting November 17th)

Topic: The Media

Readings: Chapter 7 in “We the People” & Allcott, Hunt and Matthew Gentzkow: *Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election in the Journal of Economics*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 7 on *Inquizitive*

Student Presentation Topic: Media Ownership in the United States

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). Identify the different frames and describe their impact. (Due: November 27th)

Fifteenth Week (starting November 24th) *

Topic: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Readings: Chapter 4 in “We the People” & Tesler, Michael: *Post-Racial or Most Racial? Race and Politics in the Obama Era*

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 4 on *Inquizitive*

* *Class will be online this week.*

Sixteenth Week (Dec 1st)

Final Exams go out

Monday, December 1st, exams are sent out.