

POLS 1105H: Introduction to American Government
University of Georgia
Fall 2020

Instructor:

Dr. Brittany Bramlett¹
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Class meets:

Our assigned room can safely include 6 to 8 people at a time. This means that 3 groups of students (each with 6 to 8 people) will meet rotating Mondays & Wednesdays at 10:20am to 11:10am in Baldwin Hall, 0104 (or outside when possible). Fridays will be strictly digital.

Course description

This course aims to introduce students to the foundations and organization of American government.

Course objectives

- 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
- 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

Required:

American Government: Roots and Reform (2018 Elections and Updates Edition, 13th Edition), Karen O'Connor & Larry J. Sabato (**older versions are fine!**)

Recommended but not required:

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

Participation (10%)

Throughout the semester, there will be 9 online discussion posts (and one extra online discussion post for bonus points) in response to class discussion and reflection slides. To receive full participation points for the assignment, the student should:

- Respond to the discussion prompt with a new thread
- Respond to another classmate's thread with a comment and question

Short online quizzes (5% each, 25% total, lowest grade dropped)

Anything from the eLC modules is considered fair game to show up on the quizzes.

Class online mini lesson (20%)

Groups of students will sign up to develop and share teaching material for one module during the semester. Students will be responsible for creating supplemental content that communicates and teaches the module material in a clear and interesting way.

Some ideas include: short live action or animated video; shareable social media series with images, links, & data; podcast; acted out play; write a song/poem; etc.

Students are encouraged to do additional research on their topic when relevant and helpful. Prepare to sign up for a date during the second week of classes.

Civic engagement reflection paper (15% total)

Reflection is a critical component of active and engaged-learning. Students will be asked to reflect on their civic engagement work individually, with a final paper assignment.

Civic engagement work (2 public meeting reports, 15% each, 30% total)

Students have the chance to practice being civically engaged in an intentional way and to document their experiences.

Each student will choose a municipality/county for which to virtually attend 2 local public meetings (council and/or commission meetings are usually pretty informative, but there are all kinds of public recorded meetings on city/county websites). Students will complete a report for each meeting, detailing what happened in the meeting, providing some analysis, and reflecting on their own engagement.

Administrative Items

ELearning

Students must become acquainted with eLearning Commons for this class (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>). Sign into eLC using your UGA MyId and password. If registered for the class, the course link should show up on the student's eLC homepage.

All content will be available via eLC.

Students must check in to eLC multiple times a week.

Students will submit all assignments via eLC.

Missed deadlines

A student who has a conflict with a due date should let the professor know ASAP. If done this way, typically things can be worked out, so the student's grade will not suffer. We are living during a pandemic. Flexibility is key, but communication also helps.

Classroom safety

Students should wear masks inside Baldwin Hall and abide by social distancing guidelines. We'll hold class outside when possible.

Disability resource center

If the student anticipates needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, they 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. Students and faculty are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating and much more. It's in the student's 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>

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.

Tentative Course Outline

Course intro. August 21

eLC intro module:

- Welcome video
- Course syllabus
- Student survey

Week 1. August 24 – 28

eLC module 1:

- *Roots & Reform 1* (Introduction)
- *Roots & Reform 2* (The Constitution), *Georgia Politics 4*
- Course projects (civic engagement and class mini lesson) introduction
- Practice quiz

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 1 – Monday, August 24
- Group 2 – Wednesday, August 26

Week 2. August 31 – September 4

eLC module 2:

- *Roots & Reform 12* (Voting & participation)
- Class discussion & reflection (engagement & knowledge)

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 3 – Monday, August 31
- Group 1 – Wednesday, September 2

Due: Friday, September 4

- Quiz 1
- Discussion & reflection 1

Week 3. September 9 – 11 (Labor Day, holiday: Monday, September 7)

eLC module 3:

- *Roots & Reform 3* (Federalism)
- *Roots & Reform 4* (Liberties)

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- No groups – Monday, September 7 (Labor Day, holiday)
- Group 2 – Wednesday, September 9

Week 4. September 14 – 18

eLC module 4:

- *Roots & Reform 5* (Civil rights)
- Class discussion & reflection – Rights & voting

In-class project planning/ questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 3 – Monday, September 14
- No groups – Wednesday, September 16

Due: Friday, September 18

- Class mini lessons from group 1
- Quiz 2
- Discussion & reflection 2

Week 5. September 21 – 25

eLC module 5:

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress)

In-class project planning/ questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 1 – Monday, September 21
- Group 2 – Wednesday, September 23

Due: Friday, September 25

- Public meeting report 1

Week 6. September 28 – October 2

eLC module 6:

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress), *Georgia Politics 5*
- Class discussion & reflection – Congress & voting

In-class project planning/ questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 3 – Monday, September 28
- Group 1 – Wednesday, September 30

Due: Friday, October 2

- Quiz 3
- Discussion & reflection 3

Week 7. October 5 – 9

eLC module 7:

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

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 2 – Monday, October 5
- Group 3 – Wednesday, October 7

Due: Friday, October 9

- Class mini lessons from group 2

Week 8. October 12 – 16

eLC module 8:

- Class discussion & reflection – Presidency & voting
- *Roots & Reform 8 (Bureaucracy)*

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 1 – Monday, October 12
- Group 2 – Wednesday, October 14

Due: Friday, October 16

- Discussion & reflection 4

Week 9. October 19 – 23

eLC module 9:

- *Roots & Reform 9 (Judiciary), Georgia Politics 7*
- Class discussion & reflection – Courts & voting

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 3 – Monday, October 19
- Group 1 – Wednesday, October 21

Due: Friday, October 23

- Discussion & reflection 5
- Quiz 4

Week 10. October 26 – 28

eLC module 10:

- *Roots & Reform* 15 (Interest groups)
- *Roots & Reform* 11 (Parties)

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 2 – Monday, October 26
- Group 3 – Wednesday, October 28

Week 11. November 2 – 6

eLC module 11:

- *Roots & Reform* 12 & 13 (Campaigns & elections)
- Class discussion & reflection – Campaigns & elections & voting

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 1 – Monday, November 2
- Group 2 – Wednesday, November 4

Due: Friday, November 6

- Discussion & reflection 6
- Quiz 5
- Class mini lessons from group 3

Week 12. November 9 – 13

eLC module 12:

- *Roots & Reform* 14 (Media)
- Class discussion & reflection – Media literacy & voting

In-class project planning/questions (OPTIONAL):

- Group 3 – Monday, November 9
- FINAL Group 1 – Wednesday, November 11

Due: Friday, November 13

- Discussion & reflection 7

Week 13. November 16 – 20

eLC module 13:

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Political socialization)
- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Public opinion)

In-class project planning/ questions (OPTIONAL):

- FINAL Group 2 - Monday, November 16
- FINAL Group 3 – Wednesday, November 18

Due: Friday, November 20

- Quiz 6
- Public meeting report 2

Week 14. November 23 (Thanksgiving break, holiday: November 25 & 27)

eLC module 14:

- Class discussion & reflection – political socialization

Due: Monday, November 23

- Discussion & reflection 8

***** All remaining classes take place online after Thanksgiving break*****

Week 15. November 30 – December 4

eLC module 15:

- Class discussion & reflection – Active-learning & voting

Due: Friday, December 4

- Discussion & reflection 9
- Civic engagement reflection paper

Week 16. December 7 – December 9

eLC module 16:

- Watch *Please Vote for Me*
- Complete course evaluation

Due: Wednesday, December 9

- Discussion & reflection (Bonus)

Finals period, Friday, December 11 – Thursday, December 17

List of Due Dates

Quiz 1 – Friday, September 4
Quiz 2 – Friday, September 18
Quiz 3 – Friday, October 2
Quiz 4 – Friday, October 23
Quiz 5 – Friday, November 6
Quiz 6 – Friday, November 20

Class mini lessons from group 1 – Friday, September 18
Class mini lessons from group 2 – Friday, October 9
Class mini lessons from group 3 – Wednesday, October 28

Public meeting report 1 – Friday, September 25
Public meeting report 2 – Friday, November 20

Civic engagement reflection paper – Friday, December 4
Discussion & reflection 1 – Friday, September 4
Discussion & reflection 2 – Friday, September 18
Discussion & reflection 3 – Friday, October 2
Discussion & reflection 4 – Friday, October 16
Discussion & reflection 5 – Friday, October 23
Discussion & reflection 6 – Friday, November 6
Discussion & reflection 7 – Friday, November 13
Discussion & reflection 8 – Monday, November 23
Discussion & reflection 9 – Friday, December 4
Discussion & reflection bonus – Wednesday, December 9

OPTIONAL in-class project planning/questions dates:

Group 1
Monday, August 24
Wednesday, September 2
Monday, September 21
Wednesday, September 30
Monday, October 12
Wednesday, October 21
Monday, November 2
Wednesday, November 11

Group 2
Wednesday, August 26
Wednesday, September 9
Wednesday, September 23
Monday, October 5
Wednesday, October 14
Monday, October 26
Wednesday, November 4
Monday, November 16

Group 3
Monday, August 31
Monday, September 14
Monday, September 28
Wednesday, October 7
Monday, October 19
Wednesday, October 28
Monday, November 9
Wednesday, November 18