

**POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government**  
University of Georgia  
Spring 2021

Instructor:

Dr. Brittany Bramlett<sup>1</sup>

[bbram@uga.edu](mailto:bbram@uga.edu)

Office meeting times:

Before / after class

Or by appointment

Class meets:

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:35am to 10:25am  
(Complete asynchronous eLC modules  
& optional Zoom Q&A meetings with Dr. Bramlett)

Mondays, check your time / place in Athena  
(face-to-face breakouts with TA)

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, 13<sup>th</sup> 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/>)

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<sup>1</sup> Dates and assignments are subject to change by the professor.

## Assignments and grading

### **Discussion section & assignments (20%)**

Discussion sections occur every Monday, and face-to-face attendance is mandatory. Room assignments are large enough to accommodate all students, socially distanced (with masks required, of course). More than one unexcused absence will result in reduction of the student's discussion section grade. More than four unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for this portion of the course. These sections are small and benefit from student attendance and participation. The discussion section grade may also include reading quizzes and short assignments.

Discussion section instructors:

Karson Pennington	karson.pennington98@uga.edu
Jon Christian	jon.christian@uga.edu
Alec Shirer	william.shirer@uga.edu
Abdullah Kabaoglu	akabaoglu@uga.edu
Cammie Cook	cammie.cook@uga.edu
Benton Sample	bwsample@uga.edu

### **Short online quizzes (6 quizzes, 10% each, lowest grade dropped, 50% total)**

There will be 6 quizzes with the lowest quiz score dropped. The final quiz grade includes 5 quizzes, each counting 10%. Students will complete the quizzes individually via eLC and outside of class. However, students will take the quiz during our normal class time, beginning at 9:35am and lasting 15 minutes on the assigned day. Anything from the eLC modules is considered fair game to show up on the quizzes, and students may use their books and notes. Each quiz is non-cumulative, only covering recent material.

### **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 two 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

### **E-Learning**

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. Most content will be available via eLC, and most assignments should be submitted via eLC.

### **Missed deadlines**

A student who has a conflict with a due date should let the professor know ASAP. 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 when attending class and abide by social distancing guidelines.

**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.**

eLC intro module:

- Welcome video
- Course syllabus
- Student survey

Thursday, January 14 – First day of class

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

### **Week 1.**

eLC module 1

- *Roots & Reform 1* (Introduction)
- *Roots & Reform 2* (The Constitution), *Georgia Politics 4*

Monday, January 18 – No breakouts

- MLK Holiday

Tuesday, January 19

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, January 21

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

### **Week 2.**

eLC module 2:

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

Monday, January 25 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Voter education, engagement, & knowledge

Tuesday, January 26

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, January 28

- Quiz 1
- Beginning at 9:35am via eLC

### **Week 3.**

eLC module 3:

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

Monday, February 1 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Federalism & voting

Tuesday, February 2

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, February 4

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

### **Week 4.**

eLC module 4:

- *Roots & Reform 5* (Civil rights)

Monday, February 8 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Rights & voting

Tuesday, February 9

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, February 11

- Quiz 2
- Beginning at 9:35am via eLC

### **Week 5.**

eLC module 5:

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress)

Monday, February 15 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Congress & voting

Tuesday, February 16

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, February 18

- Public meeting report 1 due
- Submit at 12:45pm via Qualtrics/eLC

## **Week 6.**

eLC module 6:

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

Monday, February 22 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Check-in/ reflection

Tuesday, February 23

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, February 25

- Quiz 3
- Beginning at 9:35am via eLC

## **Week 7.**

eLC module 7:

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

Monday, March 1 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Presidency & voting

Tuesday, March 2

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, March 4

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

## **Week 8.**

eLC module 8:

- *Roots & Reform 8 (Bureaucracy)*

Monday, March 8 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Bureaucracy & voting

Tuesday, March 9

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, March 11

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

## **Week 9.**

eLC module 9:

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

Monday, March 15 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Courts & voting

Tuesday, March 16

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, March 18

- Quiz 4
- Beginning at 9:35am via eLC

## **Week 10.**

eLC module 10:

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

Monday, March 22 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Parties & voting

Tuesday, March 23

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, March 25

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

## **Week 11.**

eLC module 11:

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

Monday, March 29 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Campaigns & elections & voting

Tuesday, March 30

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, April 1

- Public meeting report 2 due
- Submit at 12:45pm via Qualtrics/eLC

## **Week 12.**

Monday, April 5 – Breakouts

- Engagement extra credit day (Campaigns & elections)

Tuesday, April 6

- Quiz 5
- Beginning at 9:35am via eLC

Thursday, April 8 – Instructional Break

- No class

## **Week 13.**

eLC module 12:

- *Roots & Reform* 14 (Media)
- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Public opinion)

Monday, April 12 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: Media literacy & voting

Tuesday, April 13

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, April 15

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

## **Week 14.**

eLC module 13:

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Political socialization)

Monday, April 19 – Breakouts

- Participation & discussion: political socialization & voting

Tuesday, April 20

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, April 22

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett



## **Week 15.**

eLC module 14:

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

Monday, April 26 – Breakouts

- Engagement extra credit day (Student choice)

Tuesday, April 27

- Optional Zoom with Dr. Bramlett

Thursday, April 29

- Quiz 6
- Beginning at 9:35am via eLC

## **Week 16.**

Monday, May 3 – Breakouts

- Film discussion & wrap up

## **List of Due Dates**

Quiz 1 – Thursday, January 28

Quiz 2 – Thursday, February 11

Quiz 3 – Thursday, February 25

Quiz 4 – Thursday, March 18

Quiz 5 – Tuesday, April 6

Quiz 6 – Thursday, April 29

Public meeting report 1 – Thursday, February 18

Public meeting report 2 – Thursday, April 1