

POLS 1105H: Introduction to American Government
University of Georgia
Spring 2021

Instructor:

Dr. Brittany Bramlett¹
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Class meets:

Our assigned room can safely include 12 people at a time. This means that 2 groups of students (each with about 10 people) will meet rotating Tuesdays & Thursdays at 12:45pm to 2:00pm in Baldwin Hall, 0307.

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 and discussion (20%)

Most weeks there will be some form of class participation and discussion. This will take place in person and occasionally via Zoom, depending on the week, so please pay attention to the syllabus and weekly emails. Students are expected to attend and participate for full credit.

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 12:45pm 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, 10% each, 20% 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.

Civic engagement reflection paper (10%)

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.

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. Significant 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. 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.

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

Participation & discussion: Course introduction & questions

- Thursday, January 14 – Everyone meet via Zoom

Week 1.

eLC module 1:

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

Participation & discussion: Engagement & knowledge

- Tuesday, January 19 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, January 21 – Group 2 joins in person

Week 2.

eLC module 2:

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

Participation & discussion: Voter education

- Tuesday, January 26 – Everyone meet via Zoom

Due: Quiz 1

- Thursday, January 28 at 12:45pm via eLC

Week 3.

eLC module 3:

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

Participation & discussion: Federalism & voting

- Tuesday, February 2 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, February 4 – Group 2 joins in person

Week 4.

eLC module 4:

- *Roots & Reform 5* (Civil rights)

Participation & discussion: Rights & voting

- Tuesday, February 9 – Everyone meet via Zoom

Due: Quiz 2

- Thursday, February 11 at 12:45pm via eLC

Week 5.

eLC module 5:

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress)

Participation & discussion: Congress & voting

- Tuesday, February 16 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, February 18 – Group 2 joins in person

Due: Public meeting report 1

- Thursday, February 18 by midnight via Quatrics/eLC

Week 6.

eLC module 6:

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

Participation & discussion: Check in

- Tuesday, February 23 – Optional meet via Zoom

Due: Quiz 3

- Thursday, February 25 at 12:45pm via eLC

Week 7.

eLC module 7:

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

Participation & discussion: Presidency & voting

- Tuesday, March 2 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, March 4 – Group 2 joins in person

Week 8.

eLC module 8:

- *Roots & Reform 8* (Bureaucracy)

Participation & discussion: Bureaucracy & voting

- Tuesday, March 9 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, March 11 – Group 2 joins in person

Week 9.

eLC module 9:

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

Participation & discussion: Courts & voting

- Tuesday, March 16 – Everyone meet via Zoom

Due: Quiz 4

- Thursday, March 18 at 12:45pm via eLC

Week 10.

eLC module 10:

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

Participation & discussion: Parties & voting

- Tuesday, March 23 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday March 25 – Group 2 joins in person

Week 11.

eLC module 11:

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

Participation & discussion: Campaigns & elections & voting

- Tuesday, March 30 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, April 1 – Group 2 joins in person

Due: Public meeting report 2

- Thursday, April 1 by midnight via Qualtrics/eLC

Week 12.

eLC module 12:

Due: Quiz 5

- Tuesday, April 6 at 12:45pm via eLC

No Class (Instructional Break)

- Thursday, April 8

Week 13.

eLC module 13:

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

Participation & discussion: Media literacy & voting

- Tuesday, April 13 – Group 1 joins in person
- Thursday, April 15 – Group 2 joins in person

Week 14.

eLC module 14:

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Political socialization)

Participation & discussion: political socialization & voting

- Tuesday, April 20 – Group 1 in person
- Thursday, April 22 – Group 2 in person

Week 15.

eLC module 15:

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

Participation & discussion: Wrap up

- Tuesday, April 27 – Everyone meet via Zoom

Due: Quiz 6

- Thursday, April 29 at 12:45pm via eLC

Due: Civic engagement reflection paper

- Thursday, April 29 by midnight via eLC

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

Civic engagement reflection paper – Thursday, April 29

In-person meeting dates:

Group 1	Tuesday, January 19
	Tuesday, February 2
	Tuesday, February 16
	Tuesday, March 2
	Tuesday, March 9
	Tuesday, March 23
	Tuesday, March 30
	Tuesday, April 13
	Tuesday, April 20
Group 2	Thursday, January 21
	Thursday, February 4
	Thursday, February 18
	Thursday, March 4
	Thursday, March 11
	Thursday, March 25
	Thursday, April 1
	Thursday, April 15
	Thursday, April 22