



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

**School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Political Science**

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

Spring Semester 2021

Instructor: Professor Alexa Bankert

Contact: alexa.bankert@uga.edu

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom.

Course Description and Objective

This course is important – whether you are a Political Science major or not. You will be introduced to the fundamentals of the American government, such as its political institutions and main actors. Most importantly, this class aims to demonstrate how you are connected to the government in your daily life and present you with tools to become informed and act in politically meaningful ways. For this purpose, we will also examine what being American means in today’s society and how our political institutions and behavior compare to other countries. By doing so, you gain a better understanding of how specific features of the American system shape politics. Ultimately, you will leave this class with a comprehensive understanding of how to critically evaluate and actively participate in the American political system.

COVID-19 Related Adjustments to the Class Format

This class consists of a biweekly lecture (Tuesdays/Thursdays) as well as a breakout session guided by a teaching assistant on Mondays. The lectures will be posted online to eLC every Tuesday and Thursday before noon. The breakout session will take place in-person (classroom assignments are listed below). In-person attendance in the breakout session is mandatory since the university arranged a classroom for us that is large enough to accommodate everyone while also maintaining social distancing requirements. Please always wear a mask in class to protect yourself and others. **If you have to go into quarantine either because you were exposed to COVID-19 or you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, please email your TA immediately.** We will find an accommodation for you so you do not miss any of the class material.

Feeling Lost?

I will strive to make sure that the course is understandable and that assignments and exams are manageable. **If you have any questions about the course content, structure, or lectures, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have any questions about grades, assignments, papers, eLC, and InQuizitive, please contact your TA.** This is especially important due to the online delivery of our material. If you email me before 5pm, you can expect an answer on the same day. If you email me after 5pm, I will get back to you first thing in the morning.

Required Text

- 1) *We the People* (12th essentials edition) – by Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, and Robert J. Spitzer **with access to InQuizitive**

*****Please note that you can also buy the textbook in an electronic format with the InQuizitive code at a more affordable rate here:**

<https://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople12ess>. ***

- 2) *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******

Required Technology: eLC

Our course is administered through eLC. You will find all of our course materials through this website. You will also submit assignments using Dropboxes on eLC. Finally, my primary means of communication with the class will be through announcements posted in eLC. Make sure you receive eLC updates for our class automatically via email (eLC > Click on your profile > Notifications > Instant Notifications). Please note that you cannot reply to an email I send out via eLC (ending in @uga.view.usg.edu emails).

Sections

You are expected to watch the online lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as join an in-person breakout session. All in-person sections take place on Mondays.

| Sect. | Time | Place | Instructor | Email |
|-------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 22283 | 8:00-8:50 | Caldwell Hall 304 | Colin Dailey | colindailey@uga.edu |
| 22298 | 9:10-10:00 | Caldwell Hall 302 | Colin Dailey | colindailey@uga.edu |
| 22299 | 9:10-10:00 | Jackson St. Bldg. 125 | Elizabeth Scott | eks63050@uga.edu |
| 22276 | 10:20-11:10 | Jackson St. Bldg. 125 | Elizabeth Scott | eks63050@uga.edu |
| 22277 | 10:20-11:10 | MLC 348 | Langston Leake | langston97@uga.edu |
| 22284 | 11:30-12:20 | MLC 248 | Langston Leake | langston97@uga.edu |
| 22301 | 11:30-12:20 | MLC 348 | Jeff Hannon | jeffery.hannon@uga.edu |

| | | | | |
|-------|------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 22279 | 12:40-1:30 | MLC 148 | Jeff Hannon | jeffery.hannon@uga.edu |
| 22281 | 12:40-1:30 | MLC 150 | Bryan Freeman | charles.freeman25@uga.edu |
| 22280 | 1:50-2:40 | Caldwell Hall 304 | Bryan Freeman | charles.freeman25@uga.edu |
| 22297 | 1:50-2:40 | Jackson St. Bldg 125 | Sam Marcotte | marcotte@uga.edu |

Evaluation

Response Paper: You will complete **one** short paper in this course. Paper topics are listed in the syllabus and match each week's theme. Please make sure to stick with the paper prompt and to rely on factual information and authoritative sources when crafting your argument. Note that the due date of the paper varies according to the topic you choose. Short papers can range from 5 to 10 pages (double spaced) and are due by 5pm on Friday the following week (see deadlines in the course schedule). Please make sure to discuss the criteria of the paper with your TA in advance. You can submit a draft of your paper to your TA for review. This draft must be submitted by the prior Friday at 5pm to get feedback by the following Tuesday. For example, Week 3 on Federalism starts on Monday, January 25th and the corresponding paper deadline is Friday, February 5th. That means you can submit a draft of your paper to your TA by Friday, January 29th and expect feedback on your paper by Tuesday, February 2nd before you submit your paper on Friday, February 5th.

Midterm: The midterm will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty. These questions will cover material from the first half of the semester. *As of now, the **midterm exam** is scheduled for Thursday, March 11th and will be available on eLC from 10am – 5pm. Please note that everybody will take the exam online.* If you accidentally miss the midterm exam, I will, regrettably, not be able to offer a make-up exam.

Final Exam: The final exam is **not** cumulative and will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty. *As of now, the final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11th and will be available on eLC from 10am – 5pm. Please note that everybody will take the exam online.* If you accidentally miss the midterm exam, I will, regrettably, not be able to offer a make-up exam.

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://digital.wwnorton.com/wethepeople12ess>) You will need to create an account in order to submit your assignments, **which are due every Friday at 5pm of each week.**

When you create your InQuizitive account, you will be asked for a Student Set ID, which is linked to the section you chose when you registered for this class. The set IDs and their corresponding breakout sections are listed below. If you have trouble with the registration process, please contact your TA.

Student Set ID is **416972** for section 22283 from 8:00am – 8:50am (TA Colin Dailey)
Student Set ID is **416976** for section 22298 from 9:10am – 10:00am (TA Colin Dailey)
Student Set ID is **416980** for section 22299 from 9:10am – 10:00am (TA Elizabeth Scott)
Student Set ID is **416983** for section 22276 from 10:20am – 11:10am (TA Elizabeth Scott)

Student Set ID is **416984** for section 22277 from 10:20am – 11:10am (TA Langston Leake)
Student Set ID is **416986** for section 22284 from 11:30am – 12:20pm (TA Langston Leake)

Student Set ID is **416988** for section 22301 from 11:30am – 12:20pm (TA Jeff Hannon)
Student Set ID is **416990** for section 22279 from 12:40am – 1:30pm (TA Jeff Hannon)

Student Set ID is **416991** for section 22281 from 12:40am – 1:30pm (TA Bryan Freeman)
Student Set ID is **416993** for section 22280 from 1:50am – 2:40pm (TA Bryan Freeman)

Student Set ID is **416995** for section 22297 from 1:50pm – 2:40pm (TA Sam Marcotte)

Readings and Quizzes: The required readings typically include one chapter of the textbook per week. If any additional readings are assigned they will be made available electronically on eLC. It is important that you stay current with these readings so that you can follow along with lectures and participate in discussions in your sections. I would strongly recommend you finish the readings before you complete any assignments. There will be 4 short quizzes (3-5 questions) based on the lectures and assigned readings for that week so make sure you are familiar with each chapter's key terms. Quizzes take place in your in-person breakout session on Mondays.

In-Section Participation: There will be group discussions that should demonstrate your critical reflection on the material covered in your readings and in class. Please note that attendance is required. If you cannot make it to class, please let your TA know in advance. Otherwise, numerous unexcused absences will affect your participation grade.

Online Research Survey: You are required to participate in one online survey that we will use to learn about political science research. The survey link will be distributed via email by the end of March. It will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.

Grading Breakdown by Percentage:

Final Exam: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Response Paper: 20%

Quizzes: 15%

Weekly InQuizitive Assignments: 10%

Participation: 10%

Online Research Survey: 5%

Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 100-94 A | 79-77 C+ | 63-60 D- |
| 93-90 A- | 76-74 C | 59-0 F |
| 89-87 B+ | 73-70 C- | |
| 86-84 B | 69-67 D+ | |
| 83-80 B- | 66-64 D | |

****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 your TA.****

Important Class Dates

First Day of Class: Thursday, January 14

Midterm Exam: Thursday, March 11

Last Day of Our Class: Thursday, April 29

Reading Day: Tuesday, May 4

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 11

Distribution of link to research survey by the end of March

Deadline for completing the research survey: Friday, April 30th

InQuizitive deadline is every Friday

Response paper deadline varies based on the topic you choose

Grade Appeals, Incompletes, Late Assignments, and Make-Up Policy

Any questions you have regarding grades should be directed to your teaching assistant. If you are unable to resolve the matter with him or her, you may appeal the grade to me. Keep in mind that formal grade appeals must be made in writing, and in the case of a paper, I will re-grade your entire paper. Therefore, your grade can go up or down. 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 necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible. Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) must be presented to the teaching assistant and accepted prior to 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). If you need a (reasonable) extension, talk to your teaching assistant. Please note that quizzes are not assignments and can therefore not be made up if missed.

Office Hours

Students who are having difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments are encouraged to contact their teaching assistant. Don’t be afraid to schedule a Zoom meeting with them. However, please note that these online office hours are for clarification of material, not for recreating a lecture or asking *extremely* detailed questions about the quizzes or the exam (i.e. “Will this be on the exam?”). If you like to talk to me, feel free to 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. Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, class schedules might change. There is not much I can do about that, except to help you navigate those changes. In turn, I ask for your patience and flexibility.

Disability Resource Center

If you anticipate needing 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 have the ability to 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

Prohibition on Recording Lectures

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

COVID-19 Safety Procedures

Face coverings. Face coverings in public spaces, including classrooms, are mandatory for all. Wearing a face covering is in addition to and not a substitute for also maintaining six feet social distancing. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area.

Keeping a safe distance. Please maintain six feet between you and others. The seating capacity in your classroom has been modified to allow for social distancing. Please sit in designated, marked seats. In all public spaces, including classrooms, you should not remove signage or re-arrange furniture, even if it appears that furniture is not being used. To help maintain distance, please keep right, where possible.

Don't congregate. If you want to spend some time chatting with someone, please take it outside or online. We are also requesting that you enter and exit any building without delay, staying outside of the building as long as practicable before your class begins and then leaving once your class is finished.

Keeping it clean. Cleaning and disinfecting of public spaces are important to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Classrooms are only being cleaned once-per-day. There are sanitation wipes/buckets and stands in proximity to your classroom. Prior to heading in to class, you should take a wipe from the station and wipe down all high-touch surfaces associated with your seat. You should help further slow the spread of the virus by frequently washing your hands.

Your health. You have been provided with a digital thermometer and are required to self-monitor for signs or symptoms of COVID-19. By coming to campus, you are acknowledging that you have checked, and do not have, symptoms of COVID-19. UGA is using a notification application to remind you daily to check for symptoms prior to coming to campus and self-report in the event you display COVID-19 symptoms. If you report symptoms, the University follows a confidential process for securely notifying health officials who can begin contact tracing and provide appropriate support services. If you have an underlying medical condition or, for any reason, believe that you are at a high risk of developing a serious case of COVID-19, you may request an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at drc@uga.edu or 706-542-8719. More information can be found at - https://drc.uga.edu/content_page/student-accommodation-guidelines

Check your email regularly so you don't miss important information, and also check the University COVID-19 website for updates and resources, this web site includes links from student affairs with helpful, up-to-date messages for students and parents.

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.

Course Schedule

First Week (starting January 14th)

Topic: The Citizen and the Government

Readings: Chapter 1 in “We The People” & Dudley Poston and Rogelio Sáenz, “[The U.S. White Majority Will Soon Disappear Forever](#)”

Second Week (starting January 21st)

*****No Breakout Session on Monday, January 18th due to MLK Jr. Day*****

Topic: The Founding and the Constitution

Readings: Chapter 2 in “We The People” & The Constitution of the United States of America pp. A11-A23.

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

Third Week (starting January 25th)

Topic: Federalism

Readings: Chapter 3 in “We The People” & Jennifer Selin, “[Trump versus the States](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 3 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Think about the COVID-19 crisis which has put states’ power in contention with national power. Write out your stance on whether the pandemic response should be addressed at the national or state level. Justify your decision. (Due: February 5th)

Fourth Week (starting February 1st)

Topic: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Readings: Chapter 4 in “We The People” & listen to Terry Gross “[A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 4 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Imagine you are a legislative staffer. Draft a policy memo on the impact of COVID-19 on existing racial discrepancies in American society (e.g. education, income, health, etc.). How can the government address these discrepancies? Justify your decision. (Due: February 12th)

Fifth Week (starting February 8th)

Topic: Public Opinion

Readings: Chapter 5 in “We The People” & Nate Cohn and Kevin Quealy “[How Public Opinion Has Moved on Black Lives Matter](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 5 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Take the Political Compass test at www.politicalcompass.org or the Pew Research Center’s political typology quiz at www.people-press.org. These sites rate your political ideology based on your opinions. Can ideology help you to guide your political opinions or should your political opinions guide your ideology? Discuss. (Due: February 19th)

Sixth Week (starting February 15th)

Topic: The Media

Readings: Chapter 6 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 6 on *InQuizitive*

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: February 26th)

Seventh Week (starting February 22nd)

Topic: Political Parties, Participation, and Elections

Readings: Chapter 7 in “We The People” & Kwame Anthony Appiah, “[People Don’t Vote for What They Want; They Vote for Who They Are](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 7 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Watch [this video](#) on voter suppression in Georgia. Why is turnout so much lower among Americans of color? Examine the role of institutional barriers in your answer and propose possible strategies to increase turnout for all Americans. (Due: March 5th)

Eighth Week (starting March 1st)

Topic: Interest Groups

Readings: Chapter 8 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 8 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Read [this article on Citizen United](#). Imagine you are an aide to a member of Congress. Write a policy memo outlining how the U.S. campaign finance system differs from the European one. You can choose which European country you want to focus on (Due: March 12th).

Ninth Week (starting March 8th)

*****Midterm exam on Thursday, March 11th*****

Topic: Congress

Readings: Chapter 9 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 9 on *InQuizitive*

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 he or she

voted on, and state whether you would have voted the same way **on behalf of your district considering your district's economic and socio-economic characteristics**. Justify your decisions. (Due: March 19th)

Tenth Week (starting March 15th)

Topic: The Presidency

Readings: Chapter 10 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 10 on *InQuizitive*

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: March 26th)

Eleventh Week (starting March 22nd)

Topic: The Bureaucracy (it is not going to be as boring as it sounds)

Readings: Chapter 11 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 11 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Read Dan Balz “[Crisis exposes how America has hollowed out its government](#)”. Why did the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic differ so much from the European one? What is the role of the bureaucracy in times of crisis? (Due: April 2nd)

Twelfth Week (starting March 29th)

Topic: The Federal Courts

Readings: Chapter 12 in “We The People” & Louis Menand, “[The Supreme Court Case that Enshrined White Supremacy into Law](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 12 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Read Alvin Chang “[Brett Kavanaugh and the Supreme Court’s shift to the right](#).” How has SCOTUS changed after the confirmation of Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh? Then consider SCOTUS cases such as *Trump vs. NAACP* or *June Medical Services v. Gee*. Why would conservative judges side with liberal judges (or vice versa)? (Due: April 9th)

Thirteenth Week (starting April 5th)

*****No class on Thursday, April 8*****

Topic: Domestic Policy

Readings: Chapter 13 in “We The People” & Eyal Press “[A Preventable Cancer Is on the Rise in Alabama](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 13 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Describe the level of income inequality in the U.S. and compare it to other countries (<https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm>). Why should or should we not care about income inequality? What are the consequences of income inequality on society and the economy? Justify your answer. (Due: April 16th)

Fourteenth Week (starting April 12th)

Topic: Foreign Policy

Readings: Chapter 14 in “We The People” & Keith Johnson “[U.S. Effort to Depart WTO Gathers Momentum](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 14 on *InQuizitive*

Short Paper Topic: Why should Americans care about foreign policy? Are isolationism and protectionism possible in today’s world? In your answer, describe the role of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization in a globalized world order. (Due: April 23rd)

Fifteenth Week (starting April 19th)

Topic: The Role of Social and Political Identities in U.S. Politics

Readings: Kirsten Weir “[Politics is Personal](#)”

Sixteenth Week (starting April 26th)

Topic: Final Exam Review

*****No breakout session on Monday, May 3rd*****

General Expectations

What I expect from you:

- To acknowledge that this is a really big class. We have 300 students! That is a big community of students. That is why we have 11 different breakout sections. Your TA is the person with the most knowledge about you and your grades.
- To check eLC (esp. announcements) on a regular basis during the week and read my emails. Even better: Enable automatic eLC updates.
- To follow professional norms when writing an email to me or your TA.
- To do the readings even when there is no quiz.
- To participate in the breakout sessions.
- To submit assignments on time.
- To check the syllabus before you email me. (In 65% of student emails, the answer is in the syllabus.)
- To post questions about the readings and the lecture to our Q&A board on eLC.
- To email me when neither the syllabus nor the Q&A board have the answer you need.
- To work on your response paper as soon as possible rather than last minute.
- To follow academic honesty policies during quizzes and exams.
- To be open-minded about the material – even if it is challenging.

What you can expect from me and your TA:

- To acknowledge that we are living through a pandemic that might come with caretaking responsibilities for some of you. If that is the case, please do not hesitate to reach out.
- To be available via email every week day (at least from 9-5pm) and Zoom (via appointment).
- To provide all additional readings via eLC.
- To communicate module goals, assignments, and deadlines on a weekly basis and to send out additional reminders.
- To be respectful when you seek help or advice.
- To grade quizzes, exams, and assignments within a week of submission.
- To provide a detailed rubric for your response paper.
- To provide feedback while you work on your response paper.
- To provide lectures and other relevant course materials on time.
- To be comically excited about political science.
- To be open-minded about your needs and expectations – even if it is challenging. ☺