

POLS 1101
American Federal Government
3:00 PM - 3:50 PM, MWF, Room: N106

Instructor: Ted D. Rossier (trossier@uga.edu)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:00 - 5:00 PM in Baldwin 303A. Zoom meetings are also available by appointment; send me an email to set one up.

Textbook: Dye and Gaddie, *Politics in America, 2018 Elections and Updates Edition + Georgia* (REVEL online, 11e; ISBN 978-0135695654)

Access to the above electronic textbook can be obtained from the university bookstore, from the publisher (Pearson REVEL), or from the outlet of your choice (Amazon is always a good option). You will need an online account on the Pearson website, and access to the quizzes and online homework at the following link: <https://console.pearson.com/enrollment/dl9bng>. NOTE: **Be very careful to make sure to purchase the correct version with the matching ISBN. This is the only one with the correct quizzes and the Georgia material.**

Course Description and Objectives: The reading assignments for the course are listed below. You should complete them during the week assigned. The usual format for class days will be a lecture either followed by or interspersed with interactive discussion. By the end of the course, you should have a good grasp of the basics of the American political system, its various parts, actors, and operations, and be well equipped to inform yourself about current political events.

You will be expected to complete weekly homework assignments using the online quizzes and learning tools associated with each assigned chapter of the textbook on the REVEL website, unless otherwise noted. The homework assignments are self-grading, and must be completed by the end of the week they are assigned (see the course schedule below). Additional readings assigned below will be made available through the e-Learning Commons. You are responsible for **all** material listed below on the course schedule, **whether or not we cover it in class**. That includes assigned readings and any supplemental material that I post to eLC. If it's on the list, or if I post it, it's important and it may show up on an exam.

The textbook contains a number of other exercises, such as writing assignments, which you are not required to complete. Only the module and end of chapter quizzes that are marked as assigned are part of your grade.

Group projects: After the first few weeks of the semester, I will divide the class into groups. Each group will complete 2 projects during the semester, both of which will consist of a short writing assignment and a presentation. The presentations will take place shortly before each midterm exam. More details and the specifics of each project will be distributed later in the course.

Top Hat system: To facilitate in-class discussion we will use the Top Hat Basic system. You will need to sign up for an account, and bring your mobile device to class each day. For additional information, please see <https://ctl.uga.edu/learning-technologies/student-response-systems/top-hat-for-students/>. Join the course on Top Hat at this link: <https://app.tophat.com/e/630872>

Grade Composition and Exams: Grading is based on a point system consisting of attendance and

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| A | 745-800 | C+ | 615-639 |
| A- | 720-744 | C | 585-614 |
| B+ | 695-719 | C- | 560-584 |
| B | 665-694 | D | 480-559 |
| B- | 640-664 | F | below 480 |

Grading scale (total points)

participation (100 pts); 2 group projects (50 pts each); online homework (200 pts); 2 midterm exams (100 pts each); and a final exam (200 pts).

All exams will be administered online through eLC, and will be multiple choice. Each exam will be timed: the midterms will be 45 minutes long, and the final will be 90 minutes. However, the exams will not be proctored and you are welcome to use any external resources you like to complete each exam, with one exception: you may not consult other humans during the exam period. The “exam period” consists of the entire time that the exam is available to the class. This restriction does not apply to other graded items, and I encourage you to study and do your homework collectively if you so desire. However, during exams, your work **must** be your own.

No makeups or extensions of time will be granted on exams, except in extreme extraordinary circumstances. Personal schedules and assignments for other courses are not considered extraordinary. A word of caution about online exams: because you have open access to anything, the exams will be more challenging than you would expect for an in-class closed book exam. In order that you may obtain the best possible score, I highly recommend that you study for the exams as if they were in-person with no books or notes, or internet access.

If you have a question about your grade in the course, please come see me in person during office hours or make an appointment. I will not discuss grades over email.

Attendance and Participation: This is an important course in your general education curriculum, and for those of you who may continue on as Political Science majors, doubly so. It is one of the few courses that satisfy the state of Georgia’s mandate to produce graduates with knowledge of the U.S. and Georgia Constitutions, and it helps guarantee that graduates of UGA are trained to be informed, active participants in the political process. Therefore, **attendance is required**. Any student who has not attended class prior to the end of the add-drop period will be administratively dropped from the course by the instructor. Further, any student with six (6) or more unexcused absences will be subject to an instructor request withdrawal from the course, based on the totality of the circumstances.

One caveat: **if you are sick, do not come to class**. Makeups for attendance and participation points are generally not possible, but any excused absence(s) that may negatively affect a student’s grade will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

This class is not a spectator sport. I expect that you will come to class having read the assignments for each day, and that you will pay attention to the lectures and other activities and engage with the material and myself. I welcome robust discussion (see below) and reserve the right to call on students

at random if I do not feel that we are being productive. Universities are places where you must anticipate being forced out of your comfort zone, so if you are shy and don't like talking in front of people, now is the time to work on it.

Technology policy: I have no objection to the use of laptops or tablets in class, provided that such use does not disrupt the proceedings or annoy/distract your classmates. Mobile phones are permitted for the purpose of using the Top Hat system (see above). The use of any device in class for other than course-related purposes is prohibited.

Civil Discourse: One of the primary purposes of a University, and one of the basic components of teaching and research, is the free exchange of ideas in open discourse. In the University environment, you should expect to encounter people, topics of conversation, and subject matter that you may find unfamiliar, offensive or objectionable. In this class we will practice freedom of speech. All points of view on a topic will be fairly heard without respect to party identification, ideology, etc. My expectation of you as students is that you will conduct yourselves in a mature and respectful manner when addressing either me or your fellow students during class discussions. This does not mean that we will not weigh the merits of a statement, idea, or point of view, because we will. Some viewpoints and arguments are more valid than others. If you've read the syllabus to this point, well done. Email me by the end of the first full week of class with the code word (justice) in the subject line, and you will receive a special points bonus at the end of the semester. Keep this to yourself and don't tell anyone or the deal's off. That being said, disagreement should not be disagreeable. Rudeness, foul language, name calling or any type of disruptive behavior will be grounds for removal from the class and the offender will be counted absent for that day. These rules also apply to any online interactions related to the course, whether through eLC, social media, or any other form of communication.

Academic Integrity and honesty: As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating on exams, improper collaboration, and fraud (such as submitting the same assignment for different classes without permission, or fabricating sources). As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of the other person. Plagiarized assignments will automatically be given a zero.

Accommodations: It is the policy of the University to provide accommodations to students for medical problems or disabilities, and/or for religious observances. Students with a disability or health-related issue who need a class accommodation should make an appointment to speak with the instructor as soon as possible. Students who need to miss class for religious observances should contact the instructor in advance to receive an excused absence. Assignment due dates will generally not be extended except in extraordinary circumstances.

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>)

Crisis support can be reached at: (<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 Outline: Below is an outline of the assigned readings and homework for the course. The lectures and class activities will generally follow this sequence; however, deviations and the inclusion of additional material deemed important by the instructor may occur. References to your textbook are abbreviated *PiA*. When a textbook chapter is assigned, the associated homework/quizzes are due by the Sunday following the end of that particular week, unless otherwise noted. NOTE: In some weeks you will not be responsible for the entire chapter(s), but only for part of a chapter or an excerpt. See the Pearson/REVEL course site for exact chapter modules to be completed.

Week 1: Government and Political Culture

PiA Chs. 1-2 (read only, no homework)

Week 2: The Founders and the Constitution

PiA Ch. 3

U.S. Constitution + amendments

The Federalist, Nos. 10, 45, 51

Week 3: Political Participation

PiA Ch. 5

Week 4: Media and Political Parties

PiA Parts of Chs. 6-7

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, et al. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *The American Political Science Review* 88(4): 829.

Week 5: Elections and Interest Groups

PiA Parts of Chs. 8-9

Abramowitz, Alan I., and Steven Webster. 2016. "The Rise of Negative Partisanship and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections in the 21st Century." *Electoral Studies* 41: 12-22.

Week 6: Group Presentations

Week 7: Continue presentations; review and Exam 1

Week 8: Congress

PiA Ch. 10

Fenno, Richard F. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *The American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917.

Week 9: The Presidency

PiA Ch. 11

Week 10: The Bureaucracy

PiA Ch. 12

McCubbins, Mathew D., and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28(1): 165-79.

Week 11: The Courts and Civil Liberties

PiA Parts of Chs. 13-14

Week 12: Civil Rights

PiA Ch. 15

"Fifth of July Speech", Frederick Douglass

Week 13: Public Policy

PiA Parts of Chs. 16-17

Week 14: Group Presentations

Week 15: Review and Exam 2 (no class on Wednesday)

Week 16: Georgia State Government

PiA Georgia section, Chs. 4-6

Final Exam Review: Monday, May 3

Final Exam: Monday, May 10

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.