



**UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA**

School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Political Science

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government Fall 2021

Mondays and Wednesdays 1:50 – 2:40
and breakout section on Fridays

Room: Instructional Plaza N106

Instructor: Professor Alexa Bankert

Contact: alexa.bankert@uga.edu

Office Hour: Wednesdays 3:00–4:30 and by appointment

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.

Class Format

This class consists of a biweekly lecture (Mondays/Fridays) as well as a breakout session guided by a teaching assistant on Fridays. The lectures will take place in-person in Instructional Plaza N106. The breakout session will also take place in-person (classroom assignments are listed below). In-person attendance in the breakout session is mandatory. **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? We can help!

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.** 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 & Technology

We the People (13th 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/wethepeople13ess>. ***

eLC

Our course is administered through eLC. You will find all of our course materials through this website. You will also submit assignments on eLC. Finally, my primary means of communication with the class will be through announcements posted in eLC. Makes 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).

TopHat

You are also required to purchase a *Top Hat account*. If you already have one from a prior class, you won't need to create a new one. If you do not have an account yet, please go to <https://support.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide> for instructions on how to get started with Top Hat. You will need access to your Top Hat account during the lecture either through your laptop or your phone. The join code for this class is 084446.

Sections

You are expected to attend one breakout section in addition to the main lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays. Please note that section attendance is mandatory. All sections take place on Fridays.

Sect.	Time	Place	Instructor	Email
10662	8:00-8:50	Journalism 513	Kyoung-Cheol Kim	kyoungcheol.kim@uga.edu
10656	9:10-10:00	Journalism 513	Kyoung-Cheol Kim	kyoungcheol.kim@uga.edu
10644	9:10-10:00	Journalism 507	Abdullah Kabaoglu	akabaoglu@uga.edu
10652	10:20-11:10	Journalism 513	Abdullah Kabaoglu	akabaoglu@uga.edu
10628	10:20-11:10	Psychology 106	Elizabeth Scott	eks63050@uga.edu
10649	11:30-12:20	Journalism 513	Elizabeth Scott	eks63050@uga.edu
10647	11:30-12:20	MLC 207	Ji Hyeun Hong	jihyeun.hong@uga.edu
10646	12:40-1:30	LeConte Hall 135	Ji Hyeun Hong	jihyeun.hong@uga.edu
10654	12:40-1:30	Journalism 513	Solbi Kim	solbi.kim@uga.edu
10655	1:50-2:40	Journalism 513	Solbi Kim	solbi.kim@uga.edu
10643	1:50-2:40	LeConte Hall 135	Austin Petrie	austin.petrie@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. There is a sign-up sheet under your breakout section's tab on eLC where you can sign up for a particular paper topic. Please note that a maximum number of 5 students can sign up for each topic. If you have not signed up for a topic by October 18th, your TA will assign you to a topic.

Short papers can range from 5 to 10 pages (double spaced) and are due by 6pm 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 6pm to get feedback by the following Tuesday. For example, Week 5 on Civil Liberties starts on Monday, September 13 and the corresponding paper deadline is Friday, September 24. That means you can submit a draft of your paper to your TA by Friday, September 17 and expect feedback on your paper by Tuesday, September 21 before you submit your paper on Friday, September 24.

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 Monday, October 11, 1:50 – 2:40 pm in Instructional Plaza N106.* 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 Friday, December 10, 12 – 3 pm in Instructional Plaza N106.* If you accidentally miss the midterm exam, I will, regrettably, not be able to offer a make-up exam.

Weekly Assignments: There will be two short weekly assignments which you can access via eLC. The first assignment is called “InQuizitive” and tests your comprehension of the assigned readings. The second assignment is called “News Quiz” and asks you to engage with current affairs. To access these assignments, you will have to create an account using the code that comes with your textbook. **These assignments are due every Friday at 6pm of each week.**

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. Over the course of the semester, there will be 4 short quizzes (3-5 questions) based on prior lectures and assigned readings so make sure you are familiar with each chapter’s key terms. Quizzes take place in your breakout session on Fridays.

Lecture and In-Section Participation: Please note that attendance in the breakout section is required. Your participation grade (10%) will primarily be based on your performance in the section, using TopHat and other activities. If you cannot make it to class, please let your TA know in advance. Otherwise, numerous unexcused absences will affect your participation grade. There will be group discussions that should demonstrate your critical reflection on the material covered in class as well as in your weekly assignments. While attendance in the lecture is not required, exams will be based on the lecture material. There will also be unannounced opportunities to earn extra-credit through your participation in *Top Hat* questions and polls.

Online Research Study: You are required to participate in an online research study. The study will take approximately 20-25 minutes and is supposed to provide you with an understanding of political science research.

Grading Breakdown by Percentage:

Final Exam: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Response Paper: 15%

Quizzes: 15%

Weekly Assignments: 15%

Participation: 10%

Participation in Online Research Study: 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: Wednesday, August 18

Drop and Add Deadline: Wednesday, August 18 – Tuesday, 24

Labor Day: Monday, September 6

Midterm Exam: Monday, October 11

Withdrawal Deadline: October 25

Fall Break: Friday, October 29

Thanksgiving: Wednesday, November 24 – Friday, November 26

Classes Resume: Monday, November 29

Last Day of Our Class: Monday, December 6

Reading Day: Wednesday, December 8

Final Exam: Friday, December 10

Distribution of link to research survey by the end of September

Deadline for completing the research survey: Friday, October 15

InQuizitive and “News Quiz” deadline is every Friday

Response paper deadline varies based on the topic you choose

Grades Due: Monday, December 20

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 paper submissions will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day that a project is late (including weekends). Weekly assignments cannot be submitted late for credit unless you arranged an extension with your TA in advance.

Office Hours

If you have difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments, please come talk to me

or your teaching assistant. We are available right after class. Don't be afraid to come by our office hours! We are not scary. However, please note that these office hours are for clarification of material, not for recreating a lecture or asking *extremely* detailed questions about the quizzes or the exam (My epitaph will read: "Will this be on the exam?")

Due to COVID-19, I will try to limit the number of students in the building. If you want to come by for office hour, please make an appointment here: <https://calendly.com/alexa-bankert> . If office hour does not work for your schedule, please email me directly to make an appointment. I am available for in-person and Zoom meetings.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (starting August 18)

Topic: Introduction to the CLass

Readings: Read the syllabus carefully. You can find it on eLC under "Course Documents".

Weekly Online Assignment: Syllabus quiz (ungraded) on eLC

There is no breakout section on Friday, August 20

Week 2 (starting August 23)

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](#)"

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 1 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Week 3 (starting August 30)

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 2 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Week 4 (starting September 8)

****No Class on Monday, September 6 due to Labor Day****

Topic: Federalism

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

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 3 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential 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: September 17)

Week 5 (starting September 13)

Topic: Civil Liberties

Readings: Chapter 4 in "We The People"

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 4 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential Short Paper Topic: Read [“Free speech in America: is the US approach fit for purpose in the age of social media?”](#) How does the U.S. differ in its free speech protection from other countries and why? How does this difference impact the U.S. ability to address the spread of false information, conspiracy theories, and echo chambers online? Evaluate the costs and benefits of the First Amendment rights. (Due: September 24)

Week 6 (starting September 20)

Topic: Civil Rights

Readings: Chapter 5 in “We The People” & listen to Terry Gross [“A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America”](#)

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 5 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential 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: October 1)

Week 7 (starting September 27)

Topic: Public Opinion

Readings: Chapter 6 in “We The People” & Nate Cohn and Kevin Quealy [“How Public Opinion Has Moved on Black Lives Matter”](#)

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 6 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Short Paper Topic: Take the Pew Research Center’s political typology quiz at <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/quiz/political-typology/>. This site identifies your political ideology based on your opinions. Should your ideology help you guide your political opinions or should your political opinions guide your ideology? Contrast your answer with a description of how ideology is used in the public discourse by voters and politicians. (Due: October 8)

Week 8 (starting October 6)

****No Class on Monday, October 4 due to Conference Participation****

Topic: The Media

Readings: Chapter 7 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 6 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential 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: October 15)

Week 9 (starting October 11)

****Midterm on Monday, October 11****

Topic: Political Parties and Interest Groups

Readings: Chapter 8 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 8 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential Short Paper Topic: Imagine you are an aide to a member of Congress. Write a policy memo for or against more regulation of lobbying. In your memo, discuss the impact

of the U.S. campaign finance system. (Due: October 22)

Week 10 (starting October 18)

Topic: Participation, Campaigns, and Elections

Readings: Chapter 9 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 9 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential Short Paper Topic: Write a list of reasons individuals may not vote. Examine the role of personal motivation as well as institutional barriers in your answer and propose possible strategies to increase turnout. (Due: November 1)

Week 11 (starting October 25)

Topic: Congress

Readings: Chapter 10 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 10 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential 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 taking into account your district’s economic and socio-economic characteristics. Justify your decisions. (Due: November 5)

Week 12 (starting November 1)

Topic: The Presidency

Readings: Chapter 11 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 11 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential Short Paper Topic: Read about President Biden’s executive orders [here](#). Compare and contrast the original intent behind executive orders as well as their contemporary use. How has political polarization changed the use of executive orders? Do executive orders further deepen the partisan divide? Why or why not? (Due: November 12)

Week 13 (starting November 8)

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

Readings: Chapter 12 in “We The People”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 11 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential 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) (Due: November 19)

Week 14 (starting November 15)

Topic: The Federal Courts

Readings: Chapter 13 in “We The People” & Louis Menand, “[The Supreme Court Case that Enshrined White Supremacy into Law](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 13 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential Short Paper Topic: Read “[Here Are 5 Takeaways From The Supreme Court Term](#)”. How has SCOTUS changed after the confirmation of Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett? Why and how would conservative judges side with liberal judges (or vice versa)? Cite evidence from SCOTUS cases in your response. (Due: November 26)

Week 15 (starting November 22)

Topic: Domestic Policy

Readings: Chapter 14 in “We The People” & Eyal Press “[A Preventable Cancer Is on the Rise in Alabama](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 14 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Potential 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? (Due: December 3)

Week 16 (starting November 29)

Topic: Foreign Policy

Readings: Chapter 15 in “We The People” & Oliver Niu “[Why American Voters Should Care More About Foreign Policy](#)”

Weekly Online Assignment: Chapter 15 on InQuizitive & Weekly News Quiz

Week 17 (December 6)

Class Wrap-Up and Final Exam Review

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.
- 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 in a timely manner.
- To provide a detailed rubric for your response paper.
- To provide feedback while you work on your response paper.
- To provide 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. ☺

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.

Culture of Honesty Policy

The University of Georgia has an academic 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://ovpi.uga.edu/academichonesty/academic-honesty-policy>. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with

fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will automatically receive an F in the course.

Disability Resource Center

If you anticipate needing classroom or exam 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. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>

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.

Preferred Name and Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make

appropriate changes to my records.

COVID-19 Safety Procedures

Face coverings. Face coverings in public spaces, including classrooms, are recommended for all.

Keeping it clean. You can help slow the spread of the virus by frequently washing your hands.

Your health. You are urged to self-monitor for signs or symptoms of COVID-19. You **ARE REQUIRED** to report a positive test through Dawg Check.

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.