

Political Science 1101

American Government

Professor Stephen Nicholson
Office: 309D Baldwin
Office Hours: T & TR 4:00 - 5:00 pm

Fall 2021
E-mail: snicholson@uga.edu
Course Website: eLC

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the institutions and processes of American national government. Over the course of the semester, we will examine explanations of how our political system operates and how well it meets its democratic aspirations. The purpose of the course is to promote learning and critical thinking about U.S. politics that goes beyond much of what we hear and read in the news, social media, and everyday conversation. One of my goals then is to have you reevaluate commonly held assumptions and criticisms of the American political system. In some instances, what you learn will run counter to commonly held views about American government (regardless of your political beliefs). In addition, we will focus on many basics of U.S. government that are not well known or understood (e.g., the Electoral College).

Course Readings:

Janda, Kenneth, Jeffrey M. Berry, Jerry Goldman, and Deborah Schildkraut. 2018. *The Challenge of Democracy: American Government in Global Politics 14th Edition*. Boston. Houghton Mifflin.

Course Requirements:

To complete the course successfully, students are required to take two exams, complete a research paper, and regularly participate in class. The purpose of the exams is to assess student factual understanding of the structure and operation of the American political system and demonstrate knowledge of the central theories, approaches, and findings to understanding American politics. The purpose of the research paper is to assess whether students can conduct basic but rigorous social science research on a topic in American politics.

Students should attend class regularly and have read the material before class. Given the large amount of material we will cover, it is important to not get behind or miss class. If you anticipate missing more than a few classes or are unable to keep up with the reading, *please drop the class*.

Students are also expected to be courteous. Please do not eat, sleep, read, arrive late to, or leave during, class time when attending live class sessions (if you must leave early, please notify me before class begins). Courtesy must also be extended to your

Class Website:

The class will be administered through the eLC website and you will use it to submit assignments and to receive class announcements. My primary means of communication with you will be through announcements posted in eLC so make sure to check *frequently*. To ensure you receive eLC updates for our class automatically via email you will need to do the following: 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).

Academic Honesty:

You are expected to adhere to the UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi. If you are unclear what constitutes plagiarism please consult the instructor.

Prohibition on Recording Classes:

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."

Grading:

There are only three parts to your final grade: two exams, a research paper, and discussion section. The two midterm exams are worth 30% each. The research paper is worth 35% (the paper assignment will be handed out in the first two weeks of class) and attendance and participation will be worth 5%. Make-up exams will be offered only for students who cannot take exams at the scheduled times for documented reasons of health and personal emergency. Unless contacted in advance (when possible), make-ups will not be granted.

I will assign grades according to the following scale:

A = 94 and above	B- = 80-83	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-93	C+ = 77-79	D = 64-66
B+ = 87-89	C = 74-76	D- = 60-63
B = 84-86	C- = 70-73	F = Below 60

Preferred Names 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.

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.

Face coverings:

Following guidance from the University System of Georgia, face coverings are recommended for all individuals while inside campus facilities.

Semester Schedule:

8/19	Introduction
8/24 & 26	Democratic Values Janda, Chapter 1 Ideology quiz at http://www.idealog.org (Choose <i>self-test</i>). The quiz is not graded.
8/31 & 9/2	Models of Democracy Janda, Chapter 2
9/7 & 9	Constitutional Foundations Janda, Chapter 3 & Appendix A1-A18
9/14 & 16	Federalism Janda, Chapter 4
9/21 & 23	Congress Janda, Chapter 11 Masket, Why Political Science Doesn't Like Term Limits

9/28 & 30	Presidency Janda, Chapter 12
10/5 & 7	Bureaucracy Janda, Chapter 13
10/12	Courts Janda, Chapter 14
10/14	Midterm Exam
10/19 & 21	Political Parties & Interest Groups Janda, Chapters 8 & 10
10/26 & 28	Mass Media Janda, Chapter 6
11/2 & 4	Public Opinion Janda, Chapter 5
11/9 & 11	Participation & Voting Janda, Chapter 7
11/16 & 18	Nominations, Elections & Campaigns Janda, Chapter 9 <u>Masket, Four things that could still affect the presidential race but probably won't</u>
11/23	Civil Rights Janda, Chapter 16
11/25	Thanksgiving Break
11/30 & 12/2	Civil Liberties Janda, Chapter 15
12/ 7	Second Midterm

This syllabus provides a general plan for the course, deviations may be necessary.