



**UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA**

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

**POLS 1101E: Introduction to American Government  
Summer 2021**

Instructor: Professor Alexa Bankert

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Teaching Assistant: Austin Petrie

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Office Hours: TU & TH 2 pm – 3 pm

### **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 daily 90-minute lecture which I will post to eLC every class day before noon. You will also complete weekly (individual and/or group) assignments that will be the basis of your participation grade.

### **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. When you email me, please allow for up to 24 hours for a reply.

### **Required Text**

1) *We the People* (13<sup>th</sup> 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>**. \*\*\*

### **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).

### **Evaluation**

**Response Paper:** You will complete **one** short paper in this course. Paper topics and deadlines are listed in the syllabus. You will be able to sign up for a paper topic in the first week of class. 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 (see deadlines in the course schedule). Short papers can range from 5 to 10 pages (double spaced) and are due by 5pm on the specified due date via eLC. You can discuss your paper with your TA in the biweekly office hour.

**Exams:** There will be three exams that are **not** cumulative and will primarily consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty. *As of now, the first exam is scheduled for Friday, May 28; the second for Friday, June 4, and the final exam for Thursday, June 10. They will be available on eLC from 10am – 5pm. Please note that everybody will take the exam online. If you accidentally miss an exam, I will, regrettably, not be able to offer a make-up exam.*

**Daily Assignments:** There will be short daily 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 class day at 6pm.**

When you create your InQuizitive account, look for “Maymester POLS1101 E Prof.

Bankert”. After you set up an InQuizitive account with your registration code (which comes with the book), you will be asked for a Student Set ID. **Our class Student Set ID is 439854.** If you have trouble with the registration process, please contact your TA.

**Readings:** The required readings typically include one chapter of the textbook per class day. If any additional readings are assigned they will be accessible electronically via the UGA library system. It is important that you stay current with these readings so that you can follow along with lectures and participate in online discussions. I would strongly recommend you finish the readings before you complete any assignments.

**Participation:** There will be weekly online assignments that should demonstrate your critical reflection on the material covered in your readings and in the lectures.

**Grading Breakdown by Percentage:**

- Exam I: 20%
- Exam II: 20%
- Exam III: 20%
- Response Paper: 20%
- InQuizitive Assignments: 10%
- Participation: 10%

**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.\*\*\**

**Important Class Dates**

- First Day of Class: May 19
- Last Day of Our Class: June 9
- First Exam: May 28
- Midterm Exam: June 4
- Final Exam: June 10
- Grades Due: June 14

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

Any questions you have regarding grades should be directed to the teaching assistant. If

you are unable to resolve the matter with him, 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). Please note that exams are not assignments. If you need a (reasonable) extension, talk to the teaching assistant.

### **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 show up for online office hour. 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](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.

**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**

#### **Day 1 (May 19)**

*Topic:* Introduction to the class, syllabus, and eLC.  
*Readings:* Syllabus on eLC under “Course Documents”

**Day 2 (May 20)**

*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](#)”  
*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 1 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 3 (May 21)**

*Topic:* The Founding and the Constitution  
*Readings:* Chapter 2 in “We The People” & The Constitution of the United States of America pp. A11-A23.  
*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 2 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 4 (May 24)**

*Topic:* Federalism  
*Readings:* Chapter 3 in “We The People” & Jennifer Selin, “[Trump versus the States](#)”  
*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 3 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 5 (May 25)**

*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](#)”  
*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 4 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 6 (May 26)**

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

**Day 7 (May 27)**

*Topic:* The Media  
*Readings:* Chapter 6 in “We The People”  
*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 6 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 8 (May 28)**

**\*\*\*First Exam\*\*\***

*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](#)”  
*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 7 on *InQuizitive*  
*Short Paper Due* – Pick one:

- 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.

**OR:**

- 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. **\*\*\*Please note you only have to write ONE paper in this class.\*\*\***

**Day 9 (May 31)**

*Topic:* Interest Groups

*Readings:* Chapter 8 in “We The People”

*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 8 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 10 (June 1)**

*Topic:* Congress

*Readings:* Chapter 9 in “We The People”

*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 9 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 11 (June 2)**

*Topic:* The Presidency

*Readings:* Chapter 10 in “We The People”

*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 10 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 12 (June 3)**

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

*Readings:* Chapter 11 in “We The People”

*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 11 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 13 (June 4)**

**\*\*\*Midterm Exam\*\*\***

*Topic:* The Federal Courts

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

*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 12 on *InQuizitive*

*Short Paper Due* – Pick one:

- 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)?

**OR:**

- *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.

**Day 14 (June 7)**

*Topic:* Domestic Policy

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

*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 13 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 15 (June 8)**

*Topic:* Foreign Policy

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

*Daily Assignment:* Chapter 14 on *InQuizitive*

**Day 16 (June 9)**

*Topic:* Final Exam Review

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

**Day 17 (June 10)**

**\*\*\*Final Exam\*\*\***

*Short Paper Due* – Pick one:

- 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.

**OR:**

- 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.