

POLS 1105H: Introduction to American Government
University of Georgia
Fall 2021

Instructor:

Dr. Brittany Bramlett¹
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Class meets:

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday at 12:40pm, Baldwin 0302

Course description

This course aims to introduce students to the foundations and organization of American government.

Course objectives

- Study the origins and workings of American government
- Analyze American government, considering democratic ideals
- Develop a working knowledge of current events in American politics
- Learn the course material by working individually and as a team
- Improve critical thinking and communication skills by considering various political perspectives, reflecting on the development of personal views, and communicating those views effectively

Course texts

Required:

American Government: Roots and Reform (2018 Elections and Updates Edition, 13th Edition), Karen O'Connor & Larry J. Sabato (**older versions are fine!**)

Referenced but not required:

Georgia Politics in a State of Change (2nd Edition), Charles S. Bullock and Ronald Gaddie.

Other assigned readings will be made available to you via E-Learning Commons

(<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>)

¹ Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed.

Assignments and grading

Attendance and participation (25%)

Attendance: I take attendance every class mostly so I learn students names but also to have a record of absences. It's important to attend class for your own benefit. Additionally, your peers and instructor value your presence as well. However, I will not take attendance for points this semester. AND, if you are unwell, please do not come to class.

Participation: Throughout the semester, there will be days set aside for class discussions where most of our time is spent talking to each other about particular topics and how they relate to voting. Students will need to attend class to participate.

Short online quizzes (6 quizzes, 5% each, lowest grade dropped, 25% total)

There will be 6 quizzes with the lowest quiz score dropped. The final quiz grade includes 5 quizzes, each counting 5%. Students will complete the quizzes individually via eLC and outside of class. However, students will take the quiz during our normal class time, beginning at 12:40pm and lasting 20 minutes on the assigned day. Anything from the class material is considered fair game to show up on the quizzes, and students may use their books and notes. Each quiz is non-cumulative, only covering recent material.

Civic engagement work (3 public meeting reports, 10% each, 30% total)

Students have the chance to practice being civically engaged in an intentional way and to document their experiences.

Each student will choose a municipality / county for which to virtually attend two local public meetings (council and / or commission meetings are usually pretty informative, but there are all kinds of public recorded meetings on city / county websites). Students will complete a report for each meeting, detailing what happened in the meeting, providing some analysis, and reflecting on their own engagement.

Civic engagement reflection paper (20%)

Reflection is a critical component of active and engaged-learning. Students will be asked to reflect on their civic engagement work individually, with a final paper assignment.

Administrative Items

ELearning

Students must become acquainted with eLearning Commons for this class (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>). Sign into eLC using your UGA MyId and password. If registered for the class, the course link should show up on the student's eLC homepage. Significant content will be available via eLC. Students must check in to eLC multiple times a week. Students will submit all assignments via eLC.

Missed deadlines

A student who has a conflict with a due date should let the professor know ASAP. Typically things can be worked out, so the student's grade will not suffer. We are living during a pandemic. Flexibility is key, but communication also helps.

Classroom safety

Students should wear masks inside Baldwin Hall and abide by social distancing guidelines.

Disability resource center

If the student anticipates needing classroom or exam accommodations due to the impact of a disability or medical condition, they 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>

UGA culture of honesty policy

The policy is in place to encourage academic honesty among students, faculty and other members of the university community. Students and faculty are responsible for knowing and complying with the policy and procedures. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating and much more. It's in the student's best interest to understand what constitutes dishonest work, as defined by the University. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F for the course, and their names will be forwarded to the University. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here:

<https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>

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.

Tentative Course Outline

Week 1. August 18 – 24 (Wednesday, August 18 – Friday, August 27)

Wednesday, August 18

- Course syllabus
- Student survey

Friday, August 20

- *Roots & Reform 1* (Introduction)

Monday, August 23

- *Roots & Reform 2* (The Constitution)

Wednesday, August 25

- *Roots & Reform 2* (The Constitution), *Georgia Politics 4*

Friday, August 27

- Civic engagement projects introduction
- Practice quiz

Week 2. August 30 – September 3

Monday, August 30

- *Roots & Reform 12* (Voting & participation)

Wednesday, September 1

- Class discussion & reflection (engagement & knowledge)

Friday, September 3

- Quiz 1 via eLC at 12:40pm
- Civic engagement workshop

Week 3. September 7 – 10 (Labor Day, holiday: Monday, September 6)

Wednesday, September 8

- *Roots & Reform 3* (Federalism)

Friday, September 10

- *Roots & Reform 4* (Liberties)

Week 4. September 13 – 17

Monday, September 13

- *Roots & Reform 5* (Civil rights)

Wednesday, September 15

- Class discussion & reflection – Rights & voting

Friday, September 17

- Quiz 2 via eLC at 12:40pm
- Public meeting report 1 due by midnight

Week 5. September 20 – 24

Monday, September 20

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress)

Wednesday, September 22

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress)

Friday, September 24

- Public meeting class reflection

Week 6. September 27 – October 1

Monday, September 27

- *Roots & Reform 6* (Congress), *Georgia Politics 5*

Wednesday, September 29

- Class discussion & reflection – Congress & voting

Friday, October 1

- Quiz 3 via eLC at 12:40pm
- Civic engagement workshop

Week 7. October 4 – 8

Monday, October 4

- *Roots & Reform 7* (Presidency)

Wednesday, October 6

- *Roots & Reform 7* (Presidency), *Georgia Politics 6*

Friday, October 8

- Civic engagement workshop
- Public meeting report 2 due by midnight

Week 8. October 11 – 15 (Midterm: October 11)

Monday, October 11

- Class discussion & reflection – Presidency & voting

Wednesday, October 13

- *Roots & Reform 8* (Bureaucracy)

Friday, October 15

- *Roots & Reform 9* (Judiciary)

Week 9. October 18 – 22

Monday, October 18

- *Roots & Reform 9* (Judiciary), *Georgia Politics 7*

Wednesday, October 20

- Class discussion & reflection – Courts & voting

Friday, October 22

- Quiz 4 via eLC at 12:40pm
- Civic engagement workshop

Week 10. October 25 – 28 (Withdrawal deadline: October 25; Fall break, holiday: Friday, October 29)

Monday, October 25

- *Roots & Reform 15* (Interest groups)

Wednesday, October 27

- *Roots & Reform 11* (Parties)

Week 11. November 1 – 5

Monday, November 1

- *Roots & Reform 12 & 13* (Campaigns & elections)

Wednesday, November 3

- *Roots & Reform 12 & 13* (Campaigns & elections)

Friday, November 5

- Quiz 5 via elc at 12:40pm
- Civic engagement workshop

Week 12. November 8 – 12

Monday, November 8

- Class discussion & reflection – Campaigns & elections & voting

Wednesday, November 10

- *Roots & Reform* 14 (Media)

Friday, November 12

- Civic engagement workshop
- Public meeting report 3 due by midnight

Week 13. November 15 – 19

Monday, November 15

- Class discussion & reflection – Media literacy & voting

Wednesday, November 17

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Political socialization)

Friday, November 19

- *Roots & Reform* 10 (Public opinion)

Week 14. November 22 - 23 (Thanksgiving break, holiday: November 24 – 26)

Monday, November 22

- Class discussion & reflection – political socialization

Week 15. November 29 – December 3

Monday, November 29

- Watch *Please Vote for Me*

Wednesday, December 1

- Class discussion & reflection – civic engagement & voting
- Complete course evaluation

Friday, December 3

- Quiz 6 via eLC at 12:40pm

Week 16. December 6 – 7

Monday, December 6

- Writing workshop

Tuesday, December 7

- Civic engagement paper due by midnight

Finals period, Friday, December 9 – Thursday, December 15

List of Important Dates

Quiz 1 – Friday, September 3

Quiz 2 – Friday, September 17

Quiz 3 – Friday, October 1

Quiz 4 – Friday, October 22

Quiz 5 – Friday, November 5

Quiz 6 – Friday, December 3

Public meeting report 1 – Friday, September 17

Public meeting report 2 – Friday, October 8

Public meeting report 3 – Friday, November 12

Civic engagement reflection paper – Tuesday, December 7