

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

University of Georgia - Fall 2022

Instructor:

Elise Blasingame

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After class or by appointment

Office: Baldwin 109B

Class Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:35am-10:50am, Baldwin 301

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Course Description

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of the American government –its origins, political institutions and main actors. Hopefully, the course will also demonstrate how you are connected to the government in your daily life and present you with tools to become an informed and engaged participant. 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. Ultimately, you will leave this class with a deeper understanding of how to critically evaluate and actively participate in the American political system.

Course Objectives

- Understand the origins and current structure of American government
- Evaluate aspects of the American political system – its institutions and stakeholders
- Be equipped to engage in the American political system – individually and through collective action

¹Kate Beaton Comics: <http://www.harkavagrant.com/>

- 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

- [American Government 3e](#) – this is a free, opensource textbook online via OpenStax. You may also purchase or rent a hard copy if you prefer. The book is referred to as AG3e below.
- Other assigned readings will be made available to you via E-Learning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>)

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Exam I** – This exam will cover material from the first seven weeks of the semester. The exam may consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, T/F and short answer questions. You will take the exam online via eLc. The exam will be open for a 24-hour period. Once you begin, you will have two hours to complete. The exam is open-book, open-note.
2. **Exam II** - This exam will cover material from the last eight weeks of the semester (non-cumulative). The exam may consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, T/F and short answer questions. You will take the exam online via eLc. The exam will be open for several days during the exam period (see tentative schedule). Once you begin, you will have three hours to complete. The exam is open-book, open-note.
3. **Critical Thinking Assignments** – There will be four critical thinking assignments to choose from throughout the semester. These are meant to help you more deeply engage with an aspect of what we are learning in class. You should only choose and complete TWO of these – one from the first half of semester and the other from the second half. All assignment options will be made available for you to see by Week 2. You are welcome to turn in any of these early, but late assignments will not be accepted.
4. **Class Participation** –I expect you to show up to class on a regular basis, listen during lecture and actively engage in class discussions. Your participation grade will reflect how well you do these three things throughout the semester. If you are chronically absent from class, I will take notice and it will impact your grade.
5. **Research Study Participation** – There will be a political science survey that I ask students to participate in toward the end of the semester. This will help you see what kinds of questions political scientists ask. You may opt out and receive an alternative assignment, but you must request this in writing (email) by the opt out deadline of October 20, 2022.

Grading

Grading Breakdown by Percentage:

Exam I (Midterm): 25%

Exam II (Final): 25%

Critical Thinking Assignments: 30%

Class Participation: 15%

Research Study Participation: 5%

Grading Scale for Final Semester Grades

| | | |
|----------|----------|---------|
| 100-94 A | 79-77 C+ | 69-60 D |
| 93-90 A- | 76-74 C | 59-0 F |
| 89-87 B+ | 73-70 C- | |
| 86-84 B | | |
| 83-80 B- | | |

Please note that there is no standard rounding policy. Rounding decisions can be made on a case-by-case basis at instructor's discretion.

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

- A final grade of "Incomplete" will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor.
- Legitimate excuses for absence from an exam (e.g., religious holiday, medical emergency, or illness) should be presented before the exam if at all possible.
- Late assignments will not be accepted.

Office Hours

Students who are having difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments are encouraged to set up an appointment for office hours. I'm really enjoy meeting with students! However, please note that office hours are for clarification of material, not for recreating a lecture if you missed class. For that, please get with other students to share notes and get a recap.

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 going to change.

Preferred Name and Pronouns

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name – sometimes that does not include your preferred name and/or gender identity. I would genuinely like to address you by your preferred name and/or pronouns. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

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 can withdraw a student from the class due to

excessive absences. 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/UGA-AHPolicy-2022.pdf>

Violations of the academic dishonesty rules are grounds for receiving an “F” in the course as well as possible expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, examine the university policy and /or ask the instructor.

Email Policy

Please give me at least 24 hours to respond to emails on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends. If I do not respond by then, please do follow-up! As instructors, our inboxes can become overwhelmed very quickly and I genuinely want to be available when you have questions or need assistance.

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.

Land and Labor Acknowledgment

I humbly acknowledge that our activities at the University of Georgia take place on land that European colonizers stole from Indigenous peoples through violence. Athens is the ancestral homelands of the Muscogee (Creek) and Cherokee peoples; lands that were seized from tribes toward the creation of our University. It is well documented that enslaved people of African descent provided exploited labor on the land where the University of Georgia was built. It is our job as members of the UGA community to acknowledge these critical aspects of our collective history and how they may shape experiences for students, faculty and staff, as well as members of our broader communities.

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.
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Tentative Course & Assignment Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, read AG3e by Tuesday and the eLC readings by Thursday.

| Date | Topic | Readings | Assignments |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| Week 1 (8/18) | Getting Started / Succeeding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About You Quiz |
| Week 2 (8/23 & 8/25) | Colonization / Constitution / Founding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • AG3e² – CH 1 & 2 | |
| Week 3 (8/30 & 9/1) | Federalism / Separation of Powers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AG3e – CH 3 • <i>No eLC readings!</i> | |
| Week 4 (9/6 & 9/8) | Models of Government & Democracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • <i>No AG3e this week!</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st CT Option Due (9/8) |
| Week 5 (9/13 & 9/15) | Georgia & State Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • AG3e – CH 14 (14.1-14.4) | |
| Week 6 (9/20 & 9/22) | City, Local & Tribal Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • AG3e – CH 14 (14.5) | |
| Week 7 (9/27 & 9/29) | Public Opinion & Media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • AG3e – CH 6 & 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd CT Option Due (9/29) |
| Week 8 (10/4 & 10/6) | Political Parties & Interest Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • AG3e – CH 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm on 10/6 via eLc (no class) |
| Week 9 (10/11 & 10/13) | Participation, Campaigns & Elections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • AG3e – CH 7 | |
| Week 10 (10/18 & 10/20) | Congress (Legislative Branch) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLC readings • AG3e – CH 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opt-out deadline for Research |

² Refers to your textbook, [American Government 3e](#).

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| | | | Participation (10/20) |
| Week 11 (10/25 & 10/27) | Presidency (Executive Branch) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eLC readings AG3e – CH 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd CT Option Due (10/27) |
| Week 12 (11/1 & 11/3) | Agencies (Executive Branch) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eLC readings AG3e – CH 15 | |
| Week 13 (11/8 & 11/10) | Courts (Judicial Branch) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eLC readings AG3e – CH 13 | |
| Week 14 (11/15 & 11/17) | Civil Rights & Liberties / Collective Action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eLC readings AG3e – CH 4 & 5 | |
| <i>Week 15 – NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!</i> | | | |
| Week 16 (11/29 & 12/1) | Workshop Days | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th CT Option Due (12/1) Review Session Signups Due |
| <i>Week 17 (12/6) – LAST DAY OF CLASS – REVIEW SESSION FOR FINAL EXAM</i> | | | |
| <i>Reading Day is 12/7</i> | | | |
| Final Exam Schedule: You may take your final exam anytime between December 8 th starting at 8:00AM EST and December 12 th at 11:59PM EST. You will take this on eLc. Once you begin the exam, you will have three hours to complete. No makeups will be provided. | | | |