POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

Fall 2022

# Grading Scale

100-94 A

93-90 A-

89-87 B+

86-84 B

83-80 B-

79-77 C+

76-74 C

73-70 C-

69-60 D

59-0 F

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Instructor Jeremy K. Cynamon EMAIL Jkcynamon@uga.edu TIME & LOCATION Tue/Thur.,  11:10-12:25 AM  Park Hall 121 OFFICE HOURS Tue/Thur.,  9:30-10:30 AM  413 Baldwin Hall | Course Overview This course serves as an introduction to the institutions and functionings of American government. We will explore the American federal system, as well as the Georgia state system. The first part of the course will cover the American founding. As a group, we will examine the goals of the founders and think about the institutions they designed to realize them. This will allow us to get a sense of both the *origins* and *justifications* of our constitutional system. In the second part of the course we will examine the contemporary functionings of these institutions, comparing them with our findings about the historical origins and justifications. Throughout the course, we will study similar themes related to the institutions of government in the state of Georgia. Required Texts We the People (12th edition or newer) - by *Andrew L. Campbell, Benjamin Ginsberg, Theodore J. Lowi, Margaret Weir, Caroline J. Tolbert, and Robert J. Spitzer*  Georgia Politics in a State of Change (2nd edition or newer) – by *Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie*  Any other assigned readings or audio/visual materials will be made available to you. Grading Breakdown **Attendance & Participation: 20%**   * This is not an assignment heavy course. There are no weekly quizzes or reading checks. That means success in this course requires you to show up to class and participate in the discussion. This will constitute 20% of your grade. If you will not be able to make a session, and have a legitimate reason (documented illness, athletics, etc.) please let me know prior to the missed session. Unexcused absences will decrease your attendance and participation grade. If you are uncomfortable speaking in a classroom setting, please set up a time to speak with me in office hours and we can come up with alternative arrangements.   **Assignment #1 Mapping a Political Dispute: 25%**   * This assignment asks you to identify a political dispute in a community (something below the national level) and try to “map” out the various factions or groups that have some stance on it. This can be very local (e.g. something happening at UGA or in Athens) or it can be more general (e.g. a dispute about a newly proposed tax at the state level). The goal is for you to figure out *who* the various groups are, *what* each thinks about the issue and *why*. This will help us to understand the broad array of competing perspectives and interests in American politics. You will turn in a visualization (in the format of your choosing) of the political dispute you have mapped, and a brief (2-3 pages double spaced, 12 pt. font) write up of the various groups (e.g. who they are, what they are united by, what they want). Students should be prepared to discuss their findings with the class and to share their visualizations. Further instructions will be provided in class.   **Assignment #2 Research Paper (6-7 pages) First Draft: 25%**   * You will write *one* paper in this course (in two drafts). The paper will ask you to pick an institution either of American national government or in the state of Georgia. You will research the historical origins of the institution, focusing on the justifications its designers provided. Then, you will think about the way the institution operates today. Finally, you will evaluate whether or not the institution functions *as it was intended to* and whether or not you think that is a *good* function. Detailed instructions will be provided in class. We will also spend ample time discussing what a university level research paper looks like and how to go about writing one. Your first draft should be between 6-7 double spaced pages with 12 pt. font.   **Assignment #3 Research Paper (7-8 pages) Final Draft: 30%**   * You will receive detailed feedback and suggestions on the first draft of your paper. Your final assignment will be to take this constructive feedback and integrate it into a *new* draft of the paper. This draft will need to be slightly longer (7-8 double spaced pages, 12 pt. font), so will also require you to expand your arguments. As I will explain in class, I am not asking you to simply edit your paper for grammar and style. Instead, the assignment will entail *revising* and *rewriting* significant portions of the paper. At the end of the assignment, you will have a much better sense of how to write successful research papers at the university level, as well as how to respond to and integrate constructive feedback on your work.  Office Hours I am here to help you be successful in this course. If you are struggling with one of the readings or topics covered in class, come speak with me during office hours. I appreciate it if you send me an email in advance indicating that you plan to attend. If my scheduled office hours do not work for you, reach out via email and we will try to set up a time that does. 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 (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> 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. Grading, Incompletes, & Late Assignments Policy -If you have questions about a grade you received in the course, find a time to come speak with me in office hours. If, after talking, you would like to formally request a re-grade you may do so. Keep in mind that formal grade appeals must be made in writing and I will re-grade your entire assignment. 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 my discretion. If an incomplete is given, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the necessary requirements as early in the following semester as possible.  - Late assignments will be docked 5 percent per day (half letter grade), for each day they are late. If you need a (reasonable) extension, talk to me *ahead of time*. 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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dates & Assignments | Subject | Reading |
| August 18th | Introduction | None |
| August 23rd | Origins & Foundations | *Declaration of Independence* |
| August 25th | Origins & Foundations | *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine [Excerpts] |
| August 30th | Origins & Foundations | *Federalist #10*, James Madison |
| September 1st  Introduce Assignment #1 | Origins & Foundations | [Watch] [*James Madison and the Constitution*, Jennifer Nedelsky](https://www.c-span.org/video/?163524-2/james-madison-constitution) |
| September 6th | Origins & Foundations | *Federalist #51*, James Madison |
| September 8th | Comparing the U.S. Constitution & the Georgia Constitution | US Constitution  *Georgia Politics* (Ch. 4) |
| September 13th | The U.S. Constitution | Bill of Rights |
| September 15th | The U.S. Constitution | *We the People* (Ch. 2 The Founding & The Constitution) |
| September 20th  Assignment #1 Due | Factions & Interest Groups | Come prepared to discuss your assignment |
| September 22nd  Introduce Assignment #2 | How to Write a Research Paper | None |
| September 27th | Federalism | *We the People* (Ch. 3 Federalism) |
| September 29th | Civil Rights | *Dredd Scott Decision Speech*, Frederick Douglass  *We the People* (Ch. 5 Civil Rights) |
| October 4th | Civil Rights | *We the People* (Ch. 5 Civil Rights) |
| October 6th | Institutions: Congress | *We the People* (Ch. 12 Congress) |
| October 11th | Institutions: Congress | *We the People* (Ch. 12 Congress) |
| October 13th  Assignment #2 Due | Institutions: Presidency | *We the People* (Ch. 13 The Presidency) |
| October 18th | Institutions: Presidency | *We the People* (Ch. 13 The Presidency)  [Watch] [*Why We Need A More Powerful Presidency*, William Howell](https://youtu.be/ZtrjVCulhAk) |
| October 20th | Institutions: Bureaucracy | *We the People* (Ch. 14 Bureaucracy in a Democracy) |
| October 25th | Institutions: Bureaucracy | *We the People* (Ch. 14 Bureaucracy in a Democracy)  [Listen] [*Morality in Bureaucracy*, Bernardo Zacka](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPpKnb5653g) |
| October 27th  Introduce Assignment #3 | How to Integrate Feedback: Revising & Rewriting a Research Paper | None |
| November 1st | Institutions: Courts | *We the People* (Ch. 15 The Federal Courts) |
| November 3rd | Institutions: Courts | *We the People* (Ch. 15 The Federal Courts)  [Watch] [*Judicial Office and Judicial Review,* Jeremy Waldron](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pk7mGyZSn5s) |
| November 8th (Election Day) | Election Day Discussion | None |
| November 10th | Voting & Voter Behavior | *We the People* (Ch. 8 Political Participation and Voting) |
| November 15th | Voting & Voter Behavior in Georgia | *Georgia Politics* (Ch. 4) |
| November 17th | Education Politics in Georgia | *Georgia Politics* (Ch. 14) |
| November 22nd | No Class (Thanksgiving Break) |  |
| November 29th | The Future of American Democracy | None |
| December 1st  Assignment #3 Due | Conclusion | Come prepared to discuss your research paper |

# list of due dates

* Assignment #1: Mapping a Political Dispute: September 20th
* Assignment #2: Research Paper First Draft: October 13th
* Assignment #3: Research Paper Final Draft: December 1st