



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

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

POLS 1101E: Introduction to American Government
Summer 2023

Instructor: Professor Alexa Bankert

Contact: alexa.bankert@uga.edu

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom.

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.

Class Format

This class consists of a daily 90-minute (+/- 10 minutes) lecture which I will post to eLC every class day, Monday to Friday, by 10am. You will also complete daily InQuizitive assignments that test your comprehension of the readings. In addition, there will also be weekly discussion and reflection 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. **We have a Q&A board on eLC where you can post your questions about course content, structure, or lectures. If you have questions specifically about your grades, please email me directly.** When you email me, please allow for up to 24 hours for a reply. Please note that you cannot reply to an email I send out via eLC (ending in @uga.view.usg.edu emails). If you have difficulty with the course materials and/or

assignments, please come talk to me in a timely manner. I am here to help you.

Email Etiquette

Please be professional and polite when you email me. It is not just a sign of respect but also a reflection of you. Poorly written emails are a quick way to make yourself look bad.

Before you hit send, read your email aloud and ask yourself:

- ⇒ Does it sound professional?
- ⇒ Does it sound like it could be a letter (not a text)?
- ⇒ Does it sound respectful?
- ⇒ Is everything spelled correctly?
- ⇒ Do I use proper punctuation and grammar?
- ⇒ Do I identify myself clearly, so my professor knows who I am and which class I'm in?
- ⇒ Do I address my instructor properly?
- ⇒ Is the subject line conveying the purpose of my email succinctly?
- ⇒ Am I using my official UGA email address? (Note that I can only reply to emails sent from your official UGA account)
- ⇒ Did I check the syllabus for an answer beforehand? ☺

Required Text

We the People (14th 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/wethepeople14ess>

Required Technology: eLC

Our course is administered through eLC. You will find all our course materials through this website. You will also submit assignments on eLC. That means that a reliable internet connection is an absolutely requirement for this course. If you decide to travel during the Maymester, I cannot provide accommodations for unreliable internet connections.

My primary means of communication with the class will be through announcements posted in eLC. Makes 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). Please also note that – due to privacy and confidentiality concern – I can only reply to emails sent from your UGA account.

Evaluation

Exams: There will be four exams that are **not** cumulative and will consist of multiple-choice questions with varying levels of difficulty. Exam dates are listed in the course schedule below. Exams will be available on eLC from 8am to 6pm and need to be completed within one sitting. You will have one hour for each exam. **If you accidentally miss an exam, I will, regrettably, not be able to offer a make-up exam.**

InQuizitive Assignments: “InQuizitive” tests your comprehension of the assigned readings for each day. To access it, you will need the code that comes with your textbook. I will link every daily InQuizitive assignment to eLC. You will find them there under the tab “InQuizitive”. To reiterate: InQuizitive assignments must be completed via eLC. If you complete the assignments through the external Norton website, your score won’t show up in the eLC gradebook. So please access “InQuizitive” only through eLC. (Note that bookmarking the InQuizitive website does not work either.) These short daily assignments are **due every class day by midnight**. You can watch the video “How to register for and use InQuizitive in D2L” on eLC under the “InQuizitive” tab for more information.

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 the weekly discussion assignments. I would strongly recommend you finish the readings before you complete any assignments.

Weekly Assignments: There will be weekly discussion or reflection assignments that should demonstrate your critical reflection on the material covered in your readings and in the lectures. These assignments will be announced every Monday morning and are due by Friday (midnight). There are certain standards that your discussion posts need to meet to be given a high participation grade. To help you create high quality posts, I specified these standards in the list below:

- 1) When writing your post, please pay attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- 2) Be polite, especially when you disagree with an author, a piece of scholarship, or a classmate.
- 3) A paragraph entails about 3-5 sentences.
- 4) Discussion posts need to address all components of the assignment prompt.
- 5) Discussion posts need to entail references to the assigned readings and/or lecture materials.
- 6) After you post your discussion contribution, please respond to at least one other student’s post in the discussion forum (unless stated otherwise).

Unless explicitly stated, artificial intelligence-based technologies, such as ChatGPT, must not be used to generate responses for student assignments. If a discussion post is flagged as ChatGPT-generated, I will refer the case to the Office of Academic Honesty.

Grading Breakdown by Percentage:

Exam I: 15%

Exam II: 15%

Exam III: 15%

Exam IV: 15%

InQuizitive Assignments: 20%

Weekly Assignments: 20%

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: Tuesday, May 16

Last Day of Our Class: Tuesday, June 6

Exam I: Friday, May 19

Exam II: Friday, May 26

Exam III: Friday, June 2

Final Exam IV: Wednesday, June 7

Grades Due: Monday, June 12

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

You may appeal your grade but keep in mind that formal grade appeals must be made in writing within three days after receiving the grade.

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 me and accepted prior to the exam when feasible.

Late assignments will be docked half letter grade for each day that a project is late

(including weekends). Please note that exams and InQuizitive present an exception to this policy and cannot be submitted late for credit unless you arranged an extension with me in advance, so if you need a (reasonable) extension, come talk to me ahead of time.

General Expectations

What I expect from you:

- To check eLC (esp. announcements) on a regular basis during the week and read my emails. Even better: Enable automatic eLC updates.
- To follow professional norms when writing an email (from your UGA account!). A professional email includes a concise subject line, a proper greeting, proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation (not every sentence requires an exclamation mark), as well as a clear closing.
- To do the readings even when there is no quiz.
- To submit assignments on time.
- To check the syllabus and the Q&A board before emailing me. (In 65% of student emails, the answer is in the syllabus.)
- To email me when neither the syllabus nor the Q&A board have the answer you need.
- To follow academic honesty policies.
- To be open-minded about the material – even if it is challenging.

What you can expect from me:

- To be available via email every weekday and Zoom (via appointment).
- To provide all additional readings via eLC.
- To communicate learning goals, assignments, and deadlines on a daily basis and to send out additional reminders.
- To be respectful when you seek help or advice.
- To grade quizzes, exams, and assignments in a timely manner.
- To provide a detailed rubric for your weekly discussion assignments.
- To provide relevant course materials on time.
- To be open-minded about your needs and expectations – even if it is challenging. 😊

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.

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

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.

Preferred Name 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.

Course Schedule

Day 1 (Tuesday, May 16)

Topic: Introduction to the class, syllabus, and eLC.

Readings: Syllabus on eLC under “Course Documents”

Day 2 (Wednesday, May 17)

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 (Thursday, May 18)

Topic: The Founding and the Constitution

Readings: Chapter 2 in “We The People” & The Constitution of the United States of America pp. A11-A23 & The Georgia Constitution

Daily Assignment: Chapter 2 on *InQuizitive*

Day 4 (Friday, May 19)

******EXAM I******

Topic: Federalism

Readings: Chapter 3 in “We The People” & Jennifer Selin, “[Trump versus the States](#)”

Daily Assignment: Chapter 3 on *InQuizitive*

Weekly Discussion Assignment due by midnight

Day 5 (Monday, May 22)

Topic: Civil Liberties

Readings: Chapter 4 in “We The People” & NPR: “[Music Midtown pulls the plug over Georgia's gun laws](#)”

Daily Assignment: Chapter 4 on *InQuizitive*

Day 6 (Tuesday, May 23)

Topic: Civil Rights

Readings: Chapter 5 in “We The People” listen to Terry Gross “[A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America](#)”

Daily Assignment: Chapter 5 on *InQuizitive*

Day 7 (Wednesday, May 24)

Topic: Public Opinion

Readings: Chapter 6 in “We The People” & learn about [Georgians' views on abortion](#)

Daily Assignment: Chapter 6 on *InQuizitive*

Day 8 (Thursday, May 25)

Topic: The Media

Readings: Chapter 7 in “We The People”

Daily Assignment: Chapter 7 on *InQuizitive*

Day 9 (Friday, May 26)

******EXAM II******

Topic: Political Parties & Interest Groups

Readings: Chapter 8 in “We The People” & Kwame Anthony Appiah, “[People Don't Vote for What They Want; They Vote for Who They Are](#)”

Daily Assignment: Chapter 8 on *InQuizitive*

Weekly Discussion Assignment due by midnight

Day 10 (Tuesday, May 30)

Topic: Participation, Campaigns, and Elections

Readings: Chapter 9 in “We The People” & “[Ballot drop box access in Georgia](#)”

Daily Assignment: Chapter 9 on *InQuizitive*

Day 11 (Wednesday, May 31)

Topic: Congress

Readings: Chapter 10 in “We The People” & identify and learn [about your Georgia state legislator](#)

Daily Assignment: Chapter 10 on *InQuizitive*

Day 12 (Thursday, June 1)

Topic: The Presidency & “[The reason why presidents can't keep their White House records](#)”

Readings: Chapter 11 in “We The People”
Daily Assignment: Chapter 11 on *InQuizitive*

Day 13 (Friday, June 2)

******EXAM III******

Topic: The Bureaucracy (it is not going to be as boring as it sounds, maybe ☺)
Readings: Chapter 12 in “We The People” & “[Georgia Abortion Law Says a Fetus Is Tax Deductible](#)”
Daily Assignment: Chapter 12 on *InQuizitive*
Weekly Discussion Assignment due by midnight

Day 14 (Monday, June 5)

Topic: Federal Courts
Readings: Chapter 13 in “We The People” & read about the [Justices of the Georgia Supreme Court](#)
Daily Assignment: Chapter 13 on *InQuizitive*

Day 15 (Tuesday, June 6)

Topic: Domestic Policy
Readings: Chapter 14 in “We The People” & “[In Her Hands – A Guaranteed Income Initiative in Georgia](#)”
Daily Assignment: Chapter 14 on *InQuizitive*

*****Final EXAM IV*** on Wednesday, June 7**