

POLS 4790: Native American Politics

University of Georgia - Fall 2023

Instructor:

Elise Blasingame

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Office Hours:

By Appointment

Office: Baldwin 305A

Class Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:55pm-5:10pm, Baldwin 322

Course Description

This course examines the unique politics and governance of the 600+ Native Nations in North America and their intersection with American political institutions. We will explore contemporary issues related to tribal sovereignty, federal Indian policy, economic development, and administration to provide a balanced understanding of tribal politics today. The course includes review of primary documents and work by tribal leaders, as well as some of the leading Native American scholars in the field to explore these issues as they affect Native Nations at the ground level.

Course Objectives

By completing this course, I hope you will be able to:

- Be able to explain tribal sovereignty and the unique trust relationship between Native Nations and the U.S. federal government and state governments (courts, legislatures, and the executive branch).
- Recognize how tribes engage in lobbying, voting, and campaign politics to achieve policy goals.
- Integrate cultural perspectives in Native leadership and theories of justice and governance.
- Compare Indigenous government system types and general laws and policies of Native Nations.
- Examine the struggle for Indigenous rights and theories of leadership.
- Appraise tribal economies and tribal community development initiatives.

Course Texts

- [American Indian Politics and the American Political System](#) by David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark (4th Edition).
- Other assigned readings will be made available to you via E-Learning Commons (<https://uga.view.usg.edu/>)

Grading

I use something called specifications grading in this course. It gives you as the student control over how much you engage with materials. If you are unhappy with how you did on an assignment, this means you can resubmit based on the feedback I provide until you are satisfied with the outcome. This is meant to get us focused on learning and not worried about earning points (there aren't any in this class!).

- All assignments are graded using the following rubric sourced from [Robert Talbert](#).

Mark	Criteria
Success	All parts of the assignment have a good-faith effort at a complete and correct response, and the work is mostly correct with no more than a few errors (and no major errors).
Retry	All parts of the assignment have a good-faith effort at a complete and correct response, but either there are numerous minor errors to correct or at least one major error.
Incomplete	At least one part of the assignment has no work for it; or there is work but it is not a serious attempt at a correct response; or there are major errors throughout the work; or the work is not legible.

Each assignment will have clearly outlined objectives and standards for achieving an “S” assessment. I will review all assignments and provide feedback for your consideration in order to strengthen your final learning portfolio (see below). I highly suggest you use this feedback, and that of your peers, to make your final submissions as strong as possible.

An assessment of “I” indicates that there was insufficient effort put into the assignment. In these cases, you may resubmit but I will not provide feedback on the first attempt (as there is likely not much to provide feedback on).

There will also be times when you are asked to review and provide feedback to others in the course. It is everyone’s responsibility to provide helpful, thoughtful, and respectful feedback to one another, in a timely manner, so that everyone may succeed in the course.

At the end of the semester, you will submit a portfolio of your work from the semester. This includes all of your assignments. We will use this to determine a final grade that appropriately reflects the effort and finished products you are submitting. This portfolio only consists of your final work product for each assignment.

Portfolio Assessment (Final Grade)

Grade	Weekly Reflections	Critical Thinking	Project Proposal	Final Project
A	11	1	1	1
A-	10	1	1	1
B+	9	1	1	1
B	8	1	1	1
B-	7	1	1	1
C+	6	1	1	1
C	6	1	1	0
C-	6	0	1	0
D	6	0	0	0

Note:

- There are a total of 11 weekly reflections.
- These figures assume an “S” assessment to “pass” that assignment.
- In order to receive a “D” or above you must complete the syllabus quiz.

Deadlines

Deadlines for each assignment are provided in the *Assignment Schedule* in this syllabus. Please add them to your calendar.

Each week, you may re-submit up to (2) revised assignments in addition to any assignment that is due that same week. This is to ensure that you do not fall behind in re-submitting revised assignments and also for my grading sanity.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Weekly Reading Reflections** –Every week, you will complete your reading reflection by Wednesday at 11:59PM. These will cover material from that week and are meant to prepare you for discussion on Thursdays.
2. **Critical Thinking Assignments** – There will be three critical thinking assignments to choose from throughout the semester. You are only responsible for submitting ONE of these. These are meant to help you more deeply engage with an aspect of what we are learning in class. 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.
3. **Final Project** – Acknowledging that you will each have a different interest area that brings you to this course, I would like for you to create a final project that reflects (a) your learning from the course and (b) how you might apply that to something you are passionate about. The final project guidelines will be posted, but there will be two deadlines:
 - a. **Project Proposal**– Instead of a midterm exam, you will submit a project outline that includes an abstract describing your project topic and purpose, a description of your project plan, and the medium in which you will work (e.g., writing, video, poetry, or visual arts, etc.).
 - b. **Final Project** – Instead of a final exam, you will present your final project to our class. We will use peer-grading as part of the assessment for this project to ensure everyone is present and engaged in mutual success. Your participation as a constructive peer-grader will also be considered as a part of your learning portfolio.
4. **Class Participation** –We're a learning community and a class setting only works if people are present to learn from and with one another. I ask that everyone show up to class on a regular basis, listen during lecture and actively engage in class discussions. If you do not show up, expect that to impact your final grade as it will be considered alongside your final learning portfolio.

COURSE POLICIES

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 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 me 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 me.

Emails

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.

ChatGPT and AI

You are welcome to use the abundant resources created by the machine learning world. I use them for some types of political science research myself! However, you must use these responsibly. If you use it, you should note that in the assignment. You should also be prepared to comment on what you used it for, what it got right and what it got wrong. And trust me, it got something wrong.

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 on 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.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Indigenous Studies Network at the American Political Science Association, as well as the faculty and staff of the Udall Foundation, Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona, and the American Indian Policy Institute at Arizona State University who influenced many of the readings for this course.

Tentative Course & Assignment Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, read Wilkins & Stark by Tuesday and the eLC readings/media by Thursday. Typically, Tuesday will be lecture day and Thursday will be discussion day.

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1 (8/17)	Getting Started / Succeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About You Quiz • Syllabus Quiz
Week 2 (8/22 & 8/24)	Tribal Sovereignty and the Landscape of Native America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treuer (2019) • Wilkins & Stark, Ch 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection– Due 8/25 at 11:59PM
Week 3 (8/29 & 8/31)	Treaties, Agreements, and the Trust Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilkins & Lomawaima (2001) • Wilkins & Stark, Ch 2 • Spirling (2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection – Due 9/1 at 11:59PM
Week 4 (9/7) NO CLASS 9/5	Tribal Governments & Tribal Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilkins & Stark, Ch 3 & 6 • Hicks (2007) • Evans (2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection – Due 9/8 at 11:59PM
Week 5 (9/12 & 9/14)	Indigenous Theories of Justice & Tribal Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin (2009) • Strickland (1975) • Watch “<i>Tribal Justice</i>” (PBS - 90 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st CT Option –Due 9/15 at 11:59PM • Weekly Reflection – Due 9/15 at 11:59PM
Week 6 (9/19 & 9/21)	Tribes and the Courts: Federal Indian Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Williams, Jr. (2005) • Listen to “<i>This Land</i>” podcast – Season 1 – Episode 1: The Case (Rebecca Nagle – Crooked Media) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection– Due 9/22 at 11:59PM

Week 7 (9/26 & 9/28)	The American Indian Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deloria Jr. (1969) • Wilkins & Stark, Ch 8 • Watch “Alcatraz Is Not an Island” (PBS - 60 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection– Due 9/29 at 11:59PM
Week 8 (10/3) NO CLASS 10/5	Project Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No new readings or content</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Proposal due 10/6 at 11:59PM
Week 9 (10/10 & 10/12)	Native Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlson (2022) • Blasingame (2023) • Schroedel & Aslanian (2017) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd CT Option –Due 10/13 at 11:59PM • Weekly Reflection– Due 10/13 at 11:59PM
Week 10 (10/17 & 10/19)	Tribes and States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reid & Curry (2021) • Boehmke & Witmer (2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection– Due 10/20 at 11:59PM
Week 11 (10/24) NO CLASS 10/26	Tribes and the Federal Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlson (2019) • Flaherty (2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No reflection</i>
Week 12 (10/31 & 11/2)	Tribes and International Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papillon (2015) • Robbins (2015) • Starks et al (2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd CT Option – Due 11/3 at 11:59PM • Weekly Reflection– Due 11/3 at 11:59PM
Week 13 (11/7 & 11/9)	Theories of Governance & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calliou (2005) • Berger (2012) • Masters (2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection– Due 11/10 at 11:59PM
Week 14 (11/14 & 11/16)	Native Voting Behavior & Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilkins & Stark, Ch 7 • Deloria Jr. & Lytle (1984) • Sanchez et al (2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Reflection– Due 11/17 at 11:59PM
<p><i>November 21: No more re-grading takes place after this date. If you have an assignment you would like to be re-assessed, it needs to be in before November 21 at 11:59PM.</i></p>			
<p><i>Week 15 – NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!</i></p>			
Week 16 (11/28 & 11/30)	Presentations & Indigenous Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No new readings or content</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning Portfolio Help - Signups</i>
<p><i>Week 17 (12/5) – No Class – Friday Schedule in Effect</i></p>			
<p><i>Reading Day is 12/6</i></p>			
<p>No final exam. You will need to submit your final learning portfolio on December 11th at 11:59PM EST.</p>			

Reading List

Austin, Raymond D. "The Navajo Court System" in *Navajo Courts and Navajo Common Law: A Tradition of Tribal Self-Governance*, 1-36. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

Berger, Bethany. "Elouise Cobell: Bringing the United States to Account" in *Our Cause Will Ultimately Triumph: Profiles from the American Indian Sovereignty Movement*, edited by Tim Alan Garrison, 181-193. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2014.

Blasingame, Elise N. "Holding Office in Native America: The Policy Choices of Native Women Legislators" in *Distinct Identities II: Minority Women in U.S. Politics*, 264-280, edited by Nadia E. Brown, Sarah Allen Gershon. New York, NY: Routledge, 2023.

Boehmke, Frederick J. and Richard C. Witmer. 2020. Representation and lobbying by Indian nations in California: Is tribal lobbying all about gaming? *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 9: 80-101.

Calliou, Brian. "The Culture of Leadership: North American Indigenous Leadership in a Changing Economy" in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, edited by Duane Champagne, Karen Jo Torjesen and Susan Steiner, 47-68. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2005.

Carlson, Kirsten Matoy. 2019. Lobbying Against the Odds. *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 23: 23-81.

Carlson, Kirsten Matoy. 2022. Beyond Descriptive Representation: American Indian Opposition to Federal Legislation. *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 7: 65-89.

Deloria Jr., Vine. "A Redefinition of Indian Affairs" in *Custer Died for Your Sins*, 243-267. Toronto, Ontario: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1969.

Deloria Jr., Vine, and Clifford M. Lytle. *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*. New York, NY: Pantheon (1984). **[Chapters to be assigned]**

Evans, Laura E. 2011. Expertise and Scale of Conflict: Governments and Advocates in American Indian Politics. *American Political Science Review*, 105(4): 663-682.

Flaherty, Ann F. Boxberger. "Federal Actions in the Self-Determination Era" in *Presidential Rhetoric and Indian Policy: From Nixon to the Present*, 120-155. New York, NY: Routledge, 2023.

Hicks, Sarah. "Intergovernmental Relationships – Expressions of Tribal Sovereignty" in *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development*, edited by Miriam Jorgensen, 246-271. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2007.

Masters, Dana Chapman. "Putting the 'Community' Back into My Jena Choctaw Community" in *We Will Always Be Here: Native Peoples on Living and Thriving in the South*, edited by Denise Bates, 193-143. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2016.

Papillon, Martin. "Making Space for Indigenous Governments: Comparing Patterns or Institutional Adaptation in Canada and the United States" in *Indigenous Politics: Institutions, Representation, Mobilisation* edited by Mikkel Berg-Nordlie, Jo Saglie and Anna Sullivan, 95-111. Colchester, UK: ECPR Press, 2015.

Reid, Rebecca A. and Todd A. Curry. 2021. Explaining Indigenous Peoples' Success in State Supreme Courts: Party Capability, Judicial Selection, and Representation. *Journal of Law and Courts*, 9(1): 69 – 87.

Robbins, Jane. "Indigenous Political Representation in Liberal-Democratic Countries: A Comparative Analysis" in *Indigenous Politics: Institutions, Representation, Mobilisation* edited by Mikkel Berg-Nordlie, Jo Saglie and Anna Sullivan, 61-93. Colchester, UK: ECPR Press, 2015.

Sanchez, Gabriel R., Raymond Foxworth and Laura E. Evans. 2021. Sovereign Bodies: Native Nations, Native American Women, and the Politics of 2018. *Political Research Quarterly*, 74(2): 491-505.

Schroedel, Jean Reith and Artour Aslanian. 2017. A Case Study of Descriptive Representation: The Experience of Native American Elected Officials in South Dakota. *American Indian Quarterly*, 41(3): 250-286.

Spirling, Arthur. 2012. U.S. Treaty Making with American Indians: Institutional Change and Relative Power, 1784-1911. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(1): 84-97.

Starks, Rachel Rose, Jen McCormack and Stephen Cornell. *Native Nations and U.S. Borders: Challenges to Indigenous Culture, Citizenship, and Security*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2011.

Strickland, Rennard. "Traditional Law Ways and the Spirit World" in *Fire and the Spirits: Cherokee Law from Clan to Court*, 10-39. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975.

Treuer, David. "Part I: Narrating the Apocalypse" in *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present*, 19-99. New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2019.

Wilkins, David E. and K. Tsianina Lomawaima. "With the Greatest Respect and Fidelity: The Trust Doctrine" in *Uneven Ground, American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law*, 65-97. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001.

Wilkins, David E. and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiiik Stark. *American Indian Politics and the American Political System*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Williams, Jr., Robert A. "Introduction" in *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America*, xiii-xxxvi. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.