

# POLS 1101: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT (FALL 2023)

---

## INSTRUCTOR

DR. JEREMY K.  
CYNAMON

## OFFICE

413 BALDWIN HALL

## EMAIL

JKCYNAMON@UGA.EDU

## TIME & LOCATION

MON/WED/FRIDAY

12:40-1:30 PM

BALDWIN 104

## OFFICE HOURS

MON/WED

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

AND BY APPOINTMENT

## GRADING SCALE

100-93 A  
92-90 A-  
89-87 B+  
86-83 B  
82-80 B-  
79-77 C+  
76-73 C  
72-70 C-  
69-60 D  
59-0 F

## 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 and debate the goals of the founders. We will do the same with 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 their historical origins and justifications. Throughout the course, we will study similar themes related to the institutions of government in the state of Georgia.

Students should come away from the course with a stronger understanding of the American political system, as well as the tools to express their own opinions about its various features and functions.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

*We the People* (14<sup>th</sup> Essentials Edition) (Norton)

*Georgia Politics in a State of Change* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition or newer) (Pearson) - *Charles S. Bullock III and Ronald Keith Gaddie*

All other assigned readings or audio/visual materials will be made available to you via ELC.

## GRADING BREAKDOWN

### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION: 20%

This is not an assignment heavy course. There are no weekly quizzes or reading checks. That means success in the 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. Repeated absences will decrease your attendance and participation grade. If you are uncomfortable speaking in a classroom setting meet with me in office hours and we can come up with alternative arrangements.

### ASSIGNMENT #1 MAPPING A POLITICAL DISPUTE: 25% (DUE 9/18)

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*. Then, you will provide an evaluation of which faction(s), if any, you think are in the right. 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 (3-4 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 share their visualizations. Further instructions will be provided.

**ASSIGNMENT #2 RESEARCH PAPER FIRST SUBMISSION: 25% (DUE 10/18)**

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. Further instructions will be provided. We will also spend ample time discussing what a university level research paper looks like and how to go about writing one. Your first submission should be between **6-7 double spaced pages** with 12 pt. font.

**ASSIGNMENT #3 RESEARCH PAPER FINAL SUBMISSION: 30% (DUE 12/5)**

You will receive detailed feedback and suggestions on the first submission 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 (**7-9 double spaced pages**, 12 pt. font), so it will require you to expand your arguments. This 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.

## **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](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. 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 (including weekends). 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
Week of August 16 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction: What is Political Science?	None
August 21 <sup>st</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup>	Origins & Foundations	<i>Declaration of Independence</i> <i>Common Sense</i> , Thomas Paine [Excerpts on ELC] <i>Federalist #10</i> , James Madison
August 28 <sup>th</sup> – September 1 <sup>st</sup> <b>INTRODUCE ASSIGNMENT #1</b>	Origins & Foundations II	<i>Federalist #10</i> , James Madison <i>Federalist #51</i> , James Madison
September 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	Comparing the U.S. Constitution & the Georgia Constitution	US Constitution <i>Georgia Politics</i> (Ch. 4)
September 11 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup>	The U.S. Constitution	Bill of Rights <i>We the People</i> (Ch. 2 The Founding & The Constitution)
September 18 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> <b>ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE (9/18)</b>	Factions & Interest Groups in our Communities	Come prepared to present & discuss your assignment.
September 25 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> <b>INTRODUCE ASSIGNMENT #2</b>	How to Write a Research Paper	Review sample papers [ELC]
October 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	Federalism	<i>We the People</i> (Ch. 3 Federalism)
October 9 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup>	Civil Rights & Civil Liberties	<i>Dredd Scott Decision Speech</i> , Frederick Douglass <i>We the People</i> (Ch. 5 Civil Rights, Ch. 6 Civil Liberties)
October 16 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> <b>ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE (10/18)</b>	Institutions: Congress	<i>We the People</i> (Ch. 10 Congress)
October 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup>	Institutions: Presidency	<i>We the People</i> (Ch. 11 The Presidency) [Watch] <a href="#">Why We Need A More Powerful Presidency</a> , William Howell
October 30 <sup>th</sup> – November 3 <sup>rd</sup> <b>INTRODUCE ASSIGNMENT #3</b>	Institutions: Bureaucracy How to Integrate Feedback: Revising & Rewriting a Research Paper	<i>We the People</i> (Ch. 12 Bureaucracy in a Democracy) [Listen] <a href="#">Morality in Bureaucracy</a> , Bernardo Zacka
November 6 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>	Institutions: Courts	<i>We the People</i> (Ch. 13 The Federal Courts)

DATES & ASSIGNMENTS	SUBJECT	READING
		[Watch] <a href="#">Judicial Office and Judicial Review</a> , <a href="#">Jeremy Waldron</a>
November 13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup>	Voting & Voter Behavior	<i>We the People</i> (Ch. 9 Participation, Campaigns & Elections) <i>Georgia Politics</i> (Ch. 9)
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Politics of Education in Georgia	<i>Georgia Politics</i> (Ch. 14)
November 27 <sup>th</sup> – December 1 <sup>st</sup>	The Future of American Democracy	Bring a draft of your paper to class on November 29 <sup>th</sup> for peer review.
December 4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> <b>ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE (12/5)</b>	Conclusion	Come prepared to discuss your research paper.

## LIST OF DUE DATES

- Assignment #1: Mapping a Political Dispute: [September 18<sup>th</sup>](#)
- Assignment #2: Research Paper First Submission: [October 18<sup>th</sup>](#)
- Assignment #3: Research Paper Final Submission: [December 5<sup>th</sup>](#)