

**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
POLS 1101
Fall 2023**

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Course Website: [ELC](#)
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Required Reading Materials

Required Text:

The Logic of American Politics, 11th ed. (978-1-0718-6125-7) [KJKVR] (Available at UGA Bookstore or E-Book Version available at: <https://us.sagepub.com> or <https://www.redshelf.com>)

Other Readings:

- Excerpts from *Checks and Balances? How A Parliamentary System Could Change American Politics* [M&C]
- *U.S. Constitution* [C] (Appendix 3 in KJKVR)
- One additional reading to be determined (see notes below).

Course Overview

Students will gain a more complete understanding of the basic organization and functions of the United States and Georgia governments through a series of assigned readings and lectures. Emphasis will be placed on learning basic concepts and ideas concerning how our government actually works (or fails to work). After successfully completing this course you will hopefully be able to comprehend, and meaningfully participate in, the American political process.

In addition to covering the *basics* of the American political system, two additional themes will be examined in greater detail:

- The unique structure of the U.S. political system and resulting consequences
- A second topic to be analyzed will be voted on by the class from a list of possibilities I will provide.

Monday and Wednesday meetings will normally be reserved for lectures on general topical areas, while Friday sessions will be used to focus on the themes outlined above. Students are expected to read the assigned materials prior to the class meeting and be prepared to engage in a discussion of the topic at hand.

Course Requirements/Expectations

Exams: You are expected to take all three of the regularly scheduled exams as well as the final. The grade earned on the final exam, in addition to counting for the assigned 19% of a student's grade, may also be substituted for the lowest grade earned from Exams 1-3. In the event that a student misses one of the exams scheduled during the semester (Exams 1-3), the normal procedure will be to substitute the final exam grade (Exam 4) for the missed exam.

Essay: Students will be required to complete an essay during the course of the semester. This essay will focus on the structure of the U.S. system of government and will directly relate to our Friday discussions of *Checks and Balances? How A Parliamentary System Could Change*

American Politics. More detailed information concerning this assignment will be posted on the course website. The due date for this assignment is in the Course Outline section.

Participation: Your grade in this area will be based on attendance and participation in class as well as periodic quizzes related to course readings as the need may arise. One should note that it is difficult to participate in class discussions without being physically present. Class attendance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a high participation grade. Students should also note that I consider being tardy equivalent to being absent. Translation: Get to class on time. In order to adequately prepare for class, all assigned readings should be examined by the dates indicated on this syllabus. Not all assigned readings may be discussed in class; however this does not negate your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these materials.

Grading Procedure

Your course grade will be based on the following distribution:

- Exams 4 @ 19% each¹
- Essays 1 @ 20%²
- Participation 4%

Grading Scale:

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

Course Outline-Revised³

Date	Topic	Required Readings
8/16	Course Introduction	
8/18	Why do we need government?	KJKVJ, Ch. 1
8/21	Obstacles to Collective Action	KJKVJ, Ch. 1
8/23	The U.S. and Georgia Constitutions	KJKVJ, Ch. 2; C, Articles V & VII
8/25	The U.S. and Georgia Constitutions Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 2
8/28	Federalism	KJKVJ, Ch. 3; C, Article VI, Article I, Section 8, 10 th and 14 th Amendments
8/30	Federalism Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 3
9/1	The American System—Too Unresponsive?	M&C, Ch. 1
9/4	Labor Day Holiday	

¹Makeup exams are not given.

²Failure to turn in the research paper on time will result in a penalty of one letter grade per day (including weekends); no exceptions. Note: Use of ChatGPT or other AI technology as related to this assignment is not permitted.

³I reserve the right to make minor modifications to this schedule throughout the semester as the need may arise.

9/6	Exam 1	
9/8	Comparing the American and British Systems	M&C, Ch. 2
9/11	Public Opinion	KJKVJ, Ch. 10
9/13	Public Opinion Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 10
9/15	The Contract with America	M&C, Ch. 3
9/18	The Role of the Media	KJKVJ, Ch. 14
9/20	The Role of the Media Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 14
9/22	The Founders' Viewpoint	Readings from the <i>Federalist Papers</i> [Electronic]
9/25	Political Parties	KJKVJ, Ch. 12
9/27	Political Parties Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 12
9/29	Reform Ideas for the American System	M&C, Ch. 5
10/2	Exam 2	
10/4	Campaigns and Elections	KJKVJ, Ch. 11; C, 15 th , 19 th , 24 th , and 26 th Amendments
10/6	Essay Due; Discussion of Your Counterfactuals	
10/9	Campaigns and Elections Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 11
10/11	Interest Groups	KJKVJ, Ch. 13
10/13	TBA	
10/16	Interest Groups Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 13
10/18	Legislatures—U.S./Georgia	KJKVJ, Ch. 6; C, Article I
10/20	TBA	
10/23	Legislatures Cont. Midpoint Withdrawal Deadline	KJKVJ, Ch. 6
10/25	Exam 3	
10/27	Fall Break	
10/31	The Executive—The President/The Georgia Governor	KJKVJ, Ch. 7; C, Article II, 22 nd and 25 th Amendments
11/1	The Executive Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 7
11/3	TBA	
11/6	Video Presentation: <i>Journeys with George</i>	
11/8	Video Presentation: <i>Journeys with George</i>	Discussion Following

11/10	TBA	
11/13	Presidential Elections	Electronic Reading
11/15	The Bureaucracy	KJKVJ, Ch. 8
11/17	TBA	
11/20	The Bureaucracy Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 8
11/22-24	Thanksgiving Holiday	
11/28	The Judicial Branch—U.S./Georgia	KJKVJ, Ch. 9; C, Article III
11/30	The Judicial Branch Cont.	KJKVJ, Ch. 9
12/1	TBA	
12/5	Last Day of Class; TBA	
12/11	FINAL EXAM (Exam 4); 12:00-2:00 p.m.	