

Introduction to American Government

Instructor: Grace Pittman
Email: gap05500@uga.edu
Office: Baldwin Hall 305A
Office Hours: Mondays 9:00-10:30 (and by appt.)

Course Description

Course Name: Introduction to American Government, POLS 1101
Time: MWF 8:00AM - 8:50AM
Location: Baldwin Hall 311

This course aims to provide students with an introduction into the institutions, processes, and actors that comprise the American political system. Through course lectures and readings, students will examine the founding, development, and modern state of American politics. The purpose of this course is to generate a deeper understanding of the "where, when, how, who, and why" of political outcomes or non-outcomes in the United States. Additionally, it aims to foster a greater awareness and critical analysis of current events and to inspire confidence and active participation in the political system. Finally, this course investigates features of Georgia's political system, including how state laws are made and enacted.

Course Materials

O'Connor, Karen, and Larry J. Sabato. 2018. *American Government: Roots and Reform*. 13th Edition. Pearson: New York City.

Course Requirements

Assignments for this course provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the material that they have learned throughout the semester. A student's final grade consists of four components discussed in-depth below.

Quizzes (60%): Six quizzes will be administered over the course of the semester. Quizzes are designed to assess students' ability to critically think about and recall the material they have read and observed throughout the course. Students may access the quiz on eLC beginning at 8:00AM, they will be timed, and they will be due at 9:30AM. On days reserved for quizzes, students may complete quizzes from home, rather than class! They may also utilize their notes from lectures, the textbook, and secondary readings to complete the quiz. The dates for the quizzes are provided under the course schedule.

Final Projects (25%): Students are required to complete **two** projects in this course. These projects are designed to achieve an array of objectives, such as fostering critical thinking skills, increasing political awareness, and developing the ability to succinctly present information. More information on the final projects are available through eLC, and the deadlines for final projects are listed under the course schedule.

Attendance and Participation (15%): The instructor firmly believes that student success in this course is heavily dependent upon their attendance and participation in class. Information provided through lectures is designed to supplement information in the course textbook, not repeat it, and the content of quizzes administered in this course reflect a mixture of lecture-based and textbook-based information. The instructor also believes that engaging with course materials matters for comprehension and broader application. Thus, participation in both body and mind are required in this course. The participation component of this course can be fulfilled in class or eLC. The instructor aims to provide students with weekly opportunities to discuss course materials and current events in class. If students do not participate in class, they might participate through an eLC discussion board prompt. Discussion board prompts will be made available on Fridays at the conclusion of class, and they will close on Sundays at 11:59PM. Peer responses for eLC-based participation are encouraged but not required. Please attend class, and please speak up.

Each week, students may score up to 100 points for their A&P. Given that, on average, this course meets three days a week, each day is worth 25 points—for 75 points in total. Participation is worth 25 points each week.

Final grades are assigned according to the following scale:

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

Extra Credit, Late Submissions, and Make-up Work Policy

Students will be provided with an extra credit opportunity over the course of this semester, but any student that wishes to receive extra credit is responsible for submitting their assignment by the date specified under the course schedule. The instructor will not provide additional reminders, and she will not accept late submissions. Information on the extra credit assignment is available through eLC.

Assignments are due on the dates specified in the course schedule. Students with legitimate, documented reasons for missing an assessment or assignment deadline should consult with the instructor *prior to* the due date to schedule an alternative arrangement. Provided that a student does not have a pre-approved exception or documented emergency, penalties apply for late submissions. For every day that the assignment remains outstanding, beginning the minute *after* an assignment's deadline, five points are deducted from the final grade. Assignments submitted more than *three* days after the date that they were originally due will not receive a grade.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for this course. Each student is allowed *one* unexcused absence without penalty. Any student that misses class is advised to notify the instructor as soon as possible. Furthermore, they are advised to submit information to UGA's Student Care and Outreach. The instructor will accommodate those with an excused absence (e.g., illness, religious holiday, emergency beyond the student's control, or university-sponsored activity) upon receiving the appropriate documentation.

Disability Services

The following is taken verbatim from the link (https://www.ctl.uga.edu/_resources/documents/syllabus-checklist-march-2020b.pdf):

"If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, by calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>."

Students with disabilities of any kind who require accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements are strongly encouraged to reach out to the instructor to make arrangements as soon as possible.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The following is taken verbatim from https://www.fcs.uga.edu/faculty_staff_resources/syllabus-statements :

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.

The instructor urges you to take mental health seriously. Please (!) seek help if you need it.

Academic Honesty

The following is taken verbatim from the Office of Academic Honesty and Student Appeals (<https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Introduction/>):

"UGA seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and university community. Academic honesty is vital to the very fabric and integrity of the university."

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course. Any student caught engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the UGA Office of Academic Honesty. Being unfamiliar with UGA's academic honesty policy is not a justification for engaging in academic misconduct. For more information on what constitutes academic dishonesty at UGA, please visit https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/. Students are responsible for informing themselves about these standards before submitting their coursework to the instructor.

Course Flexibility and the Use of Technology in the Classroom

The course syllabus is a tentative plan for the semester. Deviations may be necessary, and the instructor will provide students with information on any changes made to the syllabus or classroom procedures.

The instructor *only* permits the use of laptops or tablets to take notes and complete activities in the classroom. The use of technology for non-academic purposes (e.g., recording lectures without prior consent or DRC accommodation, shopping, social media, texting) distracts both the user of the device, those around them, and the instructor—who is extremely observant and easily annoyed. While the instructor permits the use of laptops and tablets in the classroom, please be aware that studies have shown that students generally *retain* the information they write down—rather than type. A notebook may be useful for organizing students' notes on the lecture and readings.

In addition, please be respectful of your fellow peers and instructor by powering off or silencing cell phones, which similarly distract the device's user.

Communications

Please reach out to the instructor regarding any questions or concerns you may have. While the instructor's office hours are set and located at the top of this syllabus, she will meet by appointment if the time frame and location conflict with a prior engagement. Students that wish to address their questions and concerns over email should send them through Outlook, not eLC. The instructor's email is provided at the top of the syllabus. The instructor makes every effort to return emails as quickly as possible—usually within one weekday.

Course Schedule

Students are encouraged to attend each class having completed and taken notes on the **week's** readings in advance. Reading the course material prior to a quiz is necessary to succeed in the course. "OC and S" refer to the course textbook, and all non-textbook readings are available in eLC.

Introductions and Politics (August 16th–August 18th)

OC and S, Chapters 1-3

Foundations (August 21st–August 25th)

OC and S, Chapters 1-3
Federalist 10, 51 (****Read for this week's discussion!)

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, August 25th, closes on Sunday, August 27th at 11:59PM.–

Federalism (August 28th–September 1st)

OC and S, Chapter 1-3
Wehle, Chapter 6 (****Read for this week's discussion!)
Neuman, NPR article (****Read for this week's discussion!)

–**QUIZ 1 SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1ST on eLC, 8:00AM–9:30AM–**

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, September 1st, closes on Sunday, September 3rd at 11:59PM.–

(**Recommended:** If Wehle's take on 2nd Amendment rights interests you, check out her book *How to Read the Constitution—and Why.*)

Civil Liberties (September 4th–September 8th)

Labor Day is Monday, September 4th. Happy break!
OC and S, Chapters 4-5

-Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, September 8th, closes on Sunday, September 10th at 11:59PM.-

Civil Rights (September 11th–September 15th)

OC and S, Chapters 4-5

-Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, September 15th, closes on Sunday, September 17th at 11:59PM.-

Political Parties (September 18th–September 22nd)

OC and S, Chapters 11-12

–QUIZ 2 SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND on eLC, 8:00AM–9:30AM–

-Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, September 22nd, closes on Sunday, September 24th at 11:59PM.-

Elections (September 25th–September 29th)

OC and S, Chapters 11-12

-Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, September 29th, closes on Sunday, October 1st at 11:59PM.-

Congress (October 2nd–October 6th)

OC and S, Chapters 6-8

–QUIZ 3 SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6TH on eLC, 8:00AM–9:30AM–

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, October 6th, closes on Sunday, October 8th at 11:59PM.–

Congress (cont.), Presidency (October 9th–October 13th)

OC and S, Chapters 6-8

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, October 13th, closes on Sunday, October 15th at 11:59PM.–

Presidency (cont.) and Bureaucracy (October 16th–October 20th)

OC and S, Chapters 6-8

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, October 20th, closes on Sunday, October 22nd at 11:59PM.–

*******Optional project check due no later than Sunday, October 22nd, 2023.**

Courts (October 23rd–October 27th)

OC and S, Chapters 9, 14

–QUIZ 4 SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25TH on eLC, 8:00AM–9:30AM–

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Wednesday, October 25th, closes on Sunday, October 29th at 11:59PM.–

Fall break on Friday, October 27th, go dawgs!

Courts (cont.), Interest Groups (October 30th–November 3rd)

OC and S, Chapters 9, 14

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, November 3rd, closes on Sunday, November 5th at 11:59PM.–

Public Opinion (November 6th–November 10th)

OC and S, Chapters 10, 13

–QUIZ 5 SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH on eLC, 8:00AM–9:30AM–

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, November 10th, closes on Sunday, November 12th at 11:59PM.–

Media (November 13th–November 17th)

OC and S, Chapters 10, 13

–Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, November 13th, closes on Sunday, November 19th at 11:59PM.–

Thanksgiving Break (November 20th–November 24th)

–No readings, no class for Monday, November 20th–

Loose Ends and Georgia Government (November 27th–December 1st)

–TBD–

–QUIZ 6 SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1ST on eLC, 8:00AM–9:30AM–

-Participation: eLC discussion board opens at the end of class on Friday, December 1st, closes on Sunday, December 3rd at 11:59PM.-

Final Assignments

This course does not administer a final exam. Rather, students will submit their final projects.

*******All projects and extra credit are due Friday, December 8th to eLC.*******