

POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government

University of Georgia Fall 2024

TR 8:00-9:15

Location: Baldwin 101D

Instructor

Alyson Hendricks-Benton

Email

ae46145@uga.edu

Office Location & Hours

101W

Tuesday 9:15-11:30 AM or

By appointment; Zoom and in person

General Information

Description

This course is designed to help students understand how the federal and state of Georgia governments have transformed over time. The process and changes of American and state government will be examined from the founding through present day, including topics such as federalism, political parties, interest groups, and bureaucracies, and others in the United States.

Expectations and Goals

Students are expected to attend/*participate* in class every day and turn in assignments on time. Students should be able to trace and explain how the national and state governments have evolved as well as express and explain the importance of founding documents, political actors, and the media. Laptops are permitted but please limit cell phone use. If there is an emergency, step into the hall.

Course Materials

Required Text:

Janda, Berry, Goldman, Schildkraut, and Manna. *The Challenge of Democracy: American Government in Global Politics 14th ed.* (This book can be purchased or rented physically and electronically). You may get a different edition to save on cost, but the LO's and page numbers may not be exactly the same.

ISBN: 978-1305954922

Wehle, Kim. *How to Read the Constitution and Why.* 2019

ISBN: 978-0062896308

On the syllabus, the textbooks will be denoted as JBGSM and W; supplemental readings will be posted on ELC and noted as ELC on the syllabus.

Course Grades

This course will be based on a 100 -point scale, detailed below:

Participation (5%): Students are expected to attend class every day. Each student gets 2 excused absences. Barring family or personal emergencies, any additional absences will negatively affect your participation grade. Attendance will be taken on 5 random days throughout the semester. Missing a class without a valid excuse will result in a 1% deduction from your overall grade.

Exams (45%; 15% each): There will be two “midterms” and one final exam. The midterms will cover material from the first three and next two units, respectively, and the final will cover the last three units. The final exam is **not** cumulative. Each exam will consist of 50 questions (30 multiple choice, 20 fill in the blank/short answers). The make-up exam must be taken within one week of the *original* exam date (extenuating circumstances notwithstanding). Notice before missing an exam is appreciated but not required.

Discussion Posts (15%; 5% each): Each student will be responsible for posting one original response to each prompt AND respond to another student’s (just one) post for full credit. Simply saying “I agree with you” will not result in full credit. Give each post thought and use lectures, textbooks, or supplemental materials to support your answers.

Quizzes (30%; 5% each): There will be six random in-class quizzes throughout the semester to check your understanding of the material. These will be multiple choice or fill in the blank questions. Five quizzes will focus on American politics and government broadly and one will focus on Georgia politics and government.

Digital Day (5%): Politics are all around us every day. Choose a recent (past 6 months) news segment from a reputable news site, newspaper, podcast and analyze the coverage: Was it fair in its reporting? Did you agree with the author/speaker? Why is this topic relevant to American politics today? **DUE 10/26 ON ELC by MIDNIGHT. Word document or PDF only. Do not type your answers in the space provided by ELC.**

Grading Scale

No plus/minus scale

90-100: A

80-89: B

70-79: C

60-69: D

59 and below: F

Late grades will have one point deducted for every day late. For example, if you received at 4.5/5 on your Digital Day assignment, but turn it in a day late then your score will be 3.5/5.

Academic Honesty

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. All academic work for this course must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

Title IX/Inclusion

This course will require discussion of potentially divisive topics. All viewpoints expressed in class should be respected. Disrespectful behavior will result in a deduction of participation points. The key to productive academic discourse is to respect other worldviews and beliefs.

Special Accommodations

Accommodation for Disabilities (e.g., If you plan to request accommodation for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.) See <https://drc.uga.edu/sample-access-statements/> for additional examples.

Disclaimer: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. Additional readings should be expected and will be announced one week ahead.

Course Schedule

Week 1: 8/12- 8/16: Syllabus

First day of classes 8/15

R: Syllabus and intro to class

Beginning of Unit 1: Foundations of national and state government

Week 2: 8/19- 8/23: Government, Democracy and Constitutions

Tuesday (8/20) is the last day to add/drop classes

T: What is Government? Read JBGSM Chapter 1 through LO4; excerpt on ELC

R: National and State Constitutions: Read W Part 1

Week 3: 8/26- 8/30: Federalist Papers and Founding

T: Founding a Nation:

R: Creating a government:

Beginning of Unit 2: People in a Nation: Political parties and public opinion in nation and state

Week 4: 9/2- 9/6: Defining Political Parties

T: Political Parties:

R: Change and Continuity in political parties:

First Discussion Post opens Tuesday 9/3 at 6 am and closes Friday 9/6 at 11:59 pm.

Week 5: 9/9- 9/13: Political Parties Con't and Public Opinion

T: Political Parties and Federalism: Read "The Political Science of Federalism" (ELC)

R: Public Opinion Intro:

Week 6: 9/16- 9/20: Public Opinion Con't and Civil Liberties

T: The Court of Public Opinion: ; article on Georgia public opinion

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/state/georgia/political-ideology/>

Beginning of Unit 3: Civil Rights and Liberties

R: Intro to Civil Rights and Liberties:

Week 7: 9/23- 9/27: Civil Rights and Liberties Con't

T: Civil Liberties Expanded:

R: Civil Rights: Read "Black lives matter and the civil rights movement: A comparative analysis of two social movements in the United States" (ELC);

Week 8: 9/30- 10/4: Economic Policy and Federal Elections

T: Economic Policy and its' Inequalities:

R: MIDTERM I

Beginning of Unit 4: Elections and Electoral Actors

Week 9: 10/7- 10/11: Elections and their Actors'

T: Federal Elections and Elections in Georgia:

R: Interest Groups and the Media:

Second Discussion Post opens Tuesday 10/8 at 6 am and closes Friday 10/11 at 11:59 pm.

Beginning of Unit 4: The Legislative Branch(es)

Week 10: 10/14- 10/18: Congress

T: Congress, its' members, and the Bureaucracy:

R: The Georgia Legislature: Read excerpt from *Georgia Politics in a State of Change* (ELC)

Beginning of Unit 6: The Executive Branch(es)

Week 11: 10/21- 10/25: The Executive Branch

Monday (10/21) is the last day to withdraw from classes

T: The Executive:

R: The Executive and the Courts:

Digital Day Papers due October 26 at MIDNIGHT.

Week 12: 10/28- 11/1: The President's Roles in Government

Fall Break starts Friday 11/1

T: Congress, the President, and Foreign Policy:

R: NO CLASS

Week 13: 11/4- 11/8: State Executive Branch

T: Georgia Executive Branch and the Governor: Read excerpt from *The Three Govenor's Controversy* and 2 news articles below and on ELC

- <https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-georgia-governor-nov-10-994a658eafee86843e084bc52beb6866>
- <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/04/1134201329/georgia-kemp-abrams-governor-race-midterms>

R: MIDTERM II

Week 14: 11/11-11/15: National and State Courts

T: The Supreme Court:

R: Other National Courts and Georgia Courts: Read excerpts on ELC

Third Discussion Post opens Tuesday 11/14 at 6 am and closes Thursday 11/17 at 11:59 pm.

Week 15: 11/18- 11/22: Review

T: **OPTIONAL EXAM REVIEW**

R: NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING BREAK

Beginning of Unit 8 (The Last One!)

Week 16: 11/25- 11/29: Media, Democracy, and Politics

T: Media and its' Mediums: From TV to X and everything in between

R: Media and its effects on Democracy

Week 17: 12/2- 12/6

T: **FRIDAY SCHEDULE IN EFFECT; NO CLASS**

R: **READING DAY**

FINAL EXAM TUESDAY DECEMBER 10th : 8:00 AM -11:00 AM

FERPA

FERPA Notice (e.g., The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation at [reg.uga.edu/ general-information/ferpa/](https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/). FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.)

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.

COVID-19

Students who test positive for COVID-19 may attend class virtually. It is recommended not to come to class if you have tested positive or are feeling ill.