

POLS 1101: American Government
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 12:40-1:30 p.m., Fall 2024
Baldwin Hall, Room 264

Professor Sidney Shank

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Office: Baldwin Hall, Room 305A

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:50-3:50 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description

This course explores the structure of the U.S. federal government and its relationship to outside actors in the political sphere and to the voting public. It covers basic historical and political development, the structure of the federal government, the relationships between the federal government and outside political actors, the impact of public opinion on the political system, and the typical policy outputs produced by the system. Specific focus will be given to institutional analysis of the federal government in contrasting how the system operates in theory versus in practice.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the three branches of the federal government as well as the bureaucracy;
- Identify how the U.S. federal government is similar to and different from state governments and other government structures worldwide;
- Define civil liberties and civil rights and identify their role in shaping U.S. law;
- Define public opinion and explain its impact on the political system;
- Explain how media, political parties, and interest groups exert influence on the federal government; and
- Compare and contrast foreign and domestic policy output.

Assigned Textbook

Krutz, Glen, and Sylvie Waskiewicz. *American Government*. Third edition. OpenStax, 2021.

This textbook is a free open-source resource provided by Rice University's OpenStax initiative. It is available online and in PDF form:

<https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e/?Book%20details>. There is also an audiobook version: <https://openaudio.us/american-government-3e/>.

Other assigned readings will be provided to students online on eLC.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance: As a student, it is your responsibility to regularly attend and participate in class; as such, I will not track your absences nor require excuses. However, you must notify me in advance of an absence on the due date of a major assignment in order for me to consider giving you an extension. Assignments submitted late without prior approval will be subject to a 10% deduction per day late.

Participation: Participation in class is worth 10% of your final grade. While I strongly prefer your participation to come in the form of questions and discussion during class, I am willing to accept detailed notes and analysis in a dedicated bluebook as a substitute. To count as full participation, your bluebook notes should contain lecture notes, questions about the material, thoughts and comments on your classmates' discussion, and other detailed analysis that demonstrates your full attention is being paid to the class. Please note that bluebook notes are an in-class assignment; no credit will be given for notes taken outside of class.

Assignments: You will have six major assignments due throughout the semester as well as reading response homework. Assignments submitted late without prior approval will be subject to a 10% deduction per day late.

Reading Responses: You will turn in 16 reading responses worth a total of 10% of your final grade. The end of every chapter in our textbook provides a series of critical thinking questions for review. For every chapter in the textbook, choose one of those questions and submit a one to two paragraph response via eLC. Responses should combine information in the textbook and lectures with your own thoughts, experiences, or observations.

Quizzes: You will take four vocabulary quizzes, each of which count for 10% of your final grade. Vocabulary terms and definitions will be taken from the textbook. Each quiz will come at the end of a textbook unit.

Final Exam: You will take one multiple choice exam, which counts for 20% of your final grade. Our final exam period for this semester is Monday, 8/9 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you do not attend the final exam, I cannot offer you a makeup exam unless you have made prior arrangements with me.

Research Paper: You will write one research paper, which counts for 20% of your final grade. Your paper should compare and contrast the U.S. federal government with Georgia's state government, evaluating their constitutional foundations, historical developments, and modern capacity for policymaking. Your paper should be a minimum of five pages with full bibliographic citations using the citation manual with which you are most comfortable.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. To clarify the application of the policy in this course: tests and written assignments should be your own work while studying and class preparation can (and should) be done with others. The use of artificial intelligence or word mixing software to write your papers is considered plagiarism in this course.

Drop/Add and Withdrawal Policies

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. The last day to drop this class this semester is Tuesday, August 20.

Undergraduate students can only withdraw from four courses and receive a withdrawal-passing (WP) grade while enrolled at UGA. Please carefully review the policy in its entirety here: <http://www.reg.uga.edu/policies/withdrawals>. The last day for withdrawals this semester is Monday, October 21.

Prohibition on Recording Lectures

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. Recordings made without prior authorization may be in violation of copyright and privacy laws, and infringements may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject to liability under copyright laws.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. If you have documentation for accommodations from Disabilities Services, please present it to me as soon as possible. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at 706-542-8719 or online at <https://drc.uga.edu>. If you cannot reach the classroom or my office, please notify me as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Preferred Names and Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Mental Health and Wellness

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 crisis support can be reached at 706-542-22273 or online at <https://caps.uga.edu>. Also consider visiting 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 at the University Health Center.

Schedule

Outlined below is an approximate schedule. Dates and assignments may be adjusted during the semester at the discretion of the professor.

Wednesday, 8/14 – Course Introduction

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 7-25

Friday, 8/16 – American Government and Civic Education

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 31-58 and pages 607-612

Monday, 8/19 – The Constitution and Its Origins

- Due: Homework 1 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC
- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 613-628

Wednesday, 8/21 – The Constitution and Its Origins

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 65-94

Friday, 8/23 – American Federalism

- Due: Homework 2 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC
- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 629-636

Monday, 8/26 – American Federalism

Wednesday, 8/28 – Quiz 1

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 101-136

Friday, 8/30 – Civil Liberties

- Due: Homework 3 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Monday, 9/2 – NO CLASS (Labor Day)

Wednesday, 9/4 – Civil Liberties

Friday, 9/6 – Civil Liberties

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 143-178

Monday, 9/9 – Civil Rights

- Due: Homework 4 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Wednesday, 9/11 – Civil Rights

Friday, 9/13 – Civil Rights

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 185-217

Monday, 9/16 – The Politics of Public Opinion

- Due: Homework 5 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Wednesday, 9/18 – The Politics of Public Opinion

Friday, 9/20 – The Politics of Public Opinion

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 223-258

Monday, 9/23 – Voting and Elections

- Due: Homework 6 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Wednesday, 9/25 – Voting and Elections

Friday, 9/27 – Voting and Elections

Monday, 9/30 – Quiz 2

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 265-291

Wednesday, 10/2 – The Media

- Due: Homework 7 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Friday, 10/4 – The Media

Monday, 10/7 – The Media

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 303-334

Wednesday, 10/9 – Political Parties

- Due: Homework 8 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Friday, 10/11 – Political Parties

Monday, 10/14 – Political Parties

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 339-366

Wednesday, 10/16 – Interest Groups and Lobbying

- Due: Homework 9 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Friday, 10/18 – Interest Groups and Lobbying

Monday, 10/21 – Quiz 3

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 373-404

Wednesday, 10/23 – Congress

- Due: Homework 10 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Friday, 10/25 – Congress

Monday, 10/28 – Congress

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 411-441

Wednesday, 10/30 – The Presidency

- Due: Homework 11 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Friday, 11/1 – NO CLASS (fall break)

Monday, 11/4 – The Presidency

Wednesday, 11/6 – The Presidency

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 447-473

Friday, 11/8 – The Courts

- Due: Homework 12 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC
- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 639-643

Monday, 11/11 – The Courts

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 481-509

Wednesday, 11/13 – State and Local Government

- Due: Homework 13 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Friday, 11/15 – State and Local Government

Monday, 11/18 – Quiz 4

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 515-540

Wednesday, 11/20 – The Bureaucracy

- Due: Homework 14 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Friday, 11/22 – The Bureaucracy

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 545-570

Monday, 11/25 – Domestic Policy

- Due: Homework 15 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Wednesday, 11/27 through Friday, 11/29 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving break)

Monday, 12/2 – Domestic Policy

- Homework: Krutz and Waskiewicz (2021) pages 577-602

Tuesday, 12/3 – Foreign Policy

- Due: Homework 16 at 12:40 p.m. on eLC

Monday, 8/9 – Final exam from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.