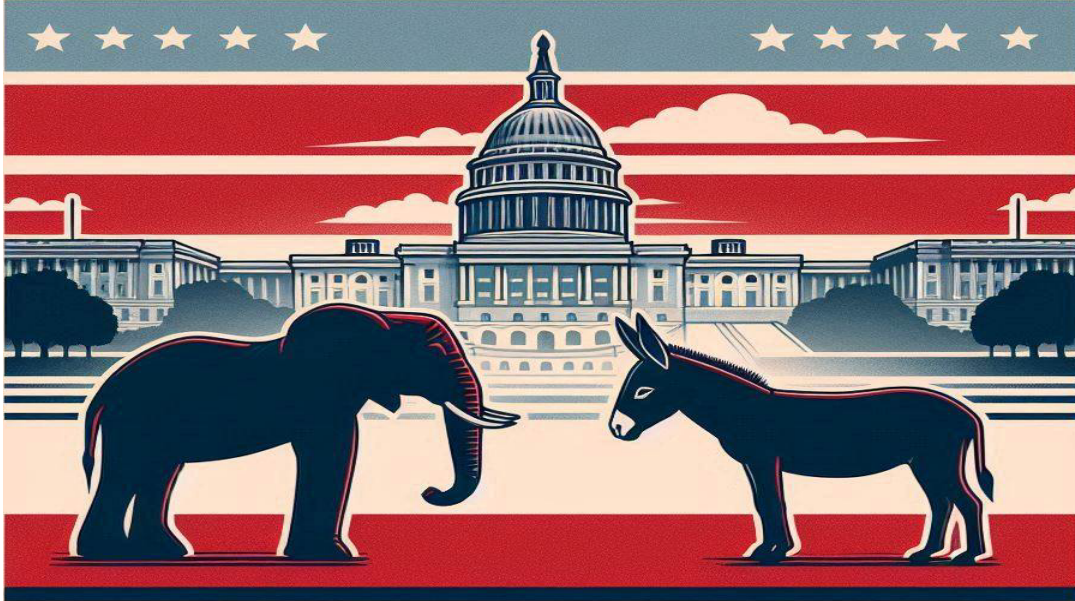


POLS 1101
Introduction to American Government
University of Georgia
Fall 2024

Tuesday/Thursday 12:45 pm - 2:00 pm, Baldwin 301



Instructor: Stewart Ulrich

Office: Baldwin 303C

Email: stewart.ulrich@uga.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:15 – 3:45 pm & by appointment

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of the American government –its origins, political institutions, and main actors. Hopefully, the course will also demonstrate how you are connected to the government in your daily life and present you with tools to become an informed and engaged participant. For this purpose, we will also examine what being American means today and how our political institutions and behavior compare to other countries. Ultimately, you will leave this class with a deeper understanding of how to critically evaluate and actively participate in the American political system.

Course Objectives

- Understand the origins and current structure of American government.
- Evaluate aspects of the American political system – its institutions and stakeholders.
- Be equipped to engage in the American political system – individually and through collective action.
- Improve critical thinking and communication skills by considering various political perspectives, reflecting on the development of personal views, and communicating those views effectively.

Course Texts

American Government 3e

-Free online copy: <https://openstax.org/details/books/american-government-3e?Book%20details>

-Hard copy can be purchased if desired

-Other readings will be made available to you via ELC

General Expectations

I expect students to behave professionally and respectfully in class, especially as we will discuss politics and the political system. Please be respectful of others' thoughts and opinions shared in class. You are expected to attend class regularly. You are expected to come prepared for each class having done the reading and ready to discuss with the class. You are responsible for each of the readings and assignments as they appear on the syllabus, as well as deadlines for assignments and exams.

Course Grading

1. Attendance & Participation – 10%
2. Writing Assignments – 15%
3. Quizzes – 15%
4. Midterm – 30%
5. Final Project – 30%

Grading scale:

100-94 A	79-77 C+
93-90 A-	76-74 C
89-87 B+	73-70 C-
86-84 B	69-60 D
83-80 B-	59-0 F

Course Requirements

- Participation: I expect you to show up to class on a regular basis, listen during class, and actively engage in class discussions. Your participation grade will reflect how well you do these three things throughout the semester.
- Attendance: You can only participate if you are in class. If you are chronically absent from class, it will impact your grade. Students are allowed two unexcused absences for the semester; these will not affect your grade and you do not need to inform the instructor that you will not be in class or the reason why. Each absence after the second one will result in points docked.
- Writing Assignments: Students will turn two papers to demonstrate ability to apply concepts discussed in class. Papers must be 3-4 pages, double spaced, use 1-inch margins, and come with properly formatted citations. The first is due Sep. 5th and the second is due Oct. 29th. Paper prompts:
 - First: Choose an aspect of the Constitution you would change. What would you change to our governmental system and why? How would this make our system better?

- Second: Pick a current political topic and compare how it is reported on three different media outlets: one of the network news stations (ABC, CBS, or NBC), one of the cable news networks (CNN, MSNBC, or FOX NEWS), and one of the major newspapers (New York Times, Wall Street Journal, or The Washington Post). Identify the different frames and evaluate their impact on readers' understanding of the issue at hand.
- Quizzes: There will be three quizzes throughout the semester. Material from all readings and class lectures/discussions will be fair game for the quizzes. These will be taken on ELC in class and are closed to all forms of assistance. As they will be available on ELC they can be taken if you are absent from class. The quizzes will only be available on ELC on the date listed on the schedule and cannot be made up if missed.
- Midterm Exam: A midterm exam covering the material of the first half of the course. The exam is NOT open note. It will feature a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Will be given during class on Oct. 8th.
- Final Project: Using an appropriate, yet creative format, students will construct a form of visual or audio media which communicates effectively a concept discussed throughout the course of the semester. This could range from something as simple as a slideshow covering a topic to something as complex as a short film illustrating an issue discussed. Students are encouraged to be as creative as possible; submissions will be graded on effort made. The topic and plan for the project are due Nov. 7th. The final project is due Dec. 9th at 5 pm.

Attendance Policy

Your grade will be based on class attendance and the quality of your participation in class. You will be marked present by participating in the poll at the beginning of each class. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. All absences that result from a documented illness that are approved by the instructor will be counted as excused. Students are expected to participate through asking questions and answering inquiries raised in class. Keep in mind that you cannot participate without being physically present. To adequately prepare for class, all assigned readings should be completed by the dates indicated on the course schedule. Not all assigned readings may be discussed in class; nonetheless you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with them.

Late Assignments and Make-up Policy

In-class activities cannot be made up. Writing assignments turned in after the due date will lose one full letter grade for each day they are late.

Office Hours

Students who are having difficulty with the course materials and/or assignments are encouraged to set up an appointment for office hours. I really enjoy meeting with students! However, please note that office hours are for clarification of material, not for recreating a lecture if you missed class. For that, please get with other students to share notes and get a recap.

Extra Credit

As of now, there is no extra credit built into the course. However, I reserve the right to offer extra credit throughout the semester. All potential extra credit will be presented in class and/or via email. I will not offer individual extra credit.

Syllabus Policy

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Preferred Name and Pronouns

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name – sometimes that does not include your preferred name and/or gender identity. I would genuinely like to address you by your preferred name and/or pronouns. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Email Policy

Please give me at least 24 hours to respond to emails on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends. If I do not respond after that, please send a polite follow-up. As instructors, our inboxes can become overwhelmed very quickly and I genuinely want to be available when you have questions or need assistance. Do not message me via ELC, please email me directly. ELC messages are clunky and easy to miss and I will respond better if you email me directly.

Course Communications

Any communications regarding changes to the course or schedule will be sent via an announcement on ELC. Please make sure you are getting those via email. Check announcements frequently to stay up to date on course changes.

Academic Honesty

Any occurrences of academic dishonesty will be taken seriously and could result in an F in the class. Please follow the UGA Student Honor Code: "*I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.*" A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at honesty.uga.edu.

Use of artificial intelligence or word mixing software to write your papers or disguise plagiarized work is considered unauthorized assistance in this course. Suspected unauthorized assistance, or other violations of UGA's "A Culture of Honesty," will be reported to the Office of Academic Honesty.

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://caps.uga.edu/wellbeing-prevention-programs-mental-health/>) or crisis support (<https://healthcenter.uga.edu/emergencies/>).

- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://caps.uga.edu/well-being-prevention-programs-mental-health/>) 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.

Tentative Course Schedule

Assigned readings are to be completed by the dates listed below

Schedule and readings are subject to change, at the instructor's discretion

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments/Reminders
8/15	Introduction	Syllabus	
8/20	Government & Representation	Ch. 1 – sections 1.1 & 1.2	
8/22	Democracy	Ch. 1 – section 1.3 We're Wired to Cooperate: NYT	Intro Survey due
8/27	Constitution & Founding	Declaration of Independence Ch. 2 – sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3	
8/29	Constitution & Founding	Ch. 2 – sections 2.4 & 2.5	
9/3	Federalism	Ch. 3 Gallup: Americans' Views on Federalism	
9/5	NO CLASS – Instructor at Conference		1 st Writing Assignment due
9/10	GA State Gov't & Politics	6 States of GA & GA's political shift	
9/12	GA Constitution Quiz #1	Scan through GA Constitution	
9/17	Civil Liberties	Ch. 4	
9/19	Civil Liberties	Gov't surveillance & Privacy in the Constitution	
9/24	Civil Rights	Ch. 5	
9/26	Civil Rights	Seneca Falls speech & I Have a Dream speech	
10/1	Public Opinion	Ch. 6 – sections 6.1 & 6.2	
10/3	Public Opinion	Ch. 6 – sections 6.3 & 6.4 Pew: Americans' view of democracy	Midterm on Tuesday

10/8	Midterm Exam		
10/10	Media & Politics	Ch. 8	
10/15	Political Parties	Ch. 9	
10/17	Interest Groups & Lobbying	Ch. 10	
10/22	The Presidency	Ch. 12 & Green Lantern Theory	
10/24	The Presidency	Argument for the EC & Argument against the EC	
10/29	Voting	Ch. 7 – sections 7.1 & 7.2	2 nd Writing Assignment due
10/31	Elections Quiz #2	Ch. 7 – Sections 7.3, 7.4, 7.5	Happy Halloween
11/5	Why People Vote	Why We Need Young Voters	Go Vote!
11/7	NO CLASS – Instructor at Conference		Plan for Final Project Due
11/12	Election Recap		
11/14	Congress	Ch. 11	
11/19	The Courts	Ch. 13	
11/21	The Bureaucracy Quiz #3	Ch. 15	
11/26	TBA	TBA	
11/28	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving		
12/3	Office Hours (12:45 – 2:00 pm) for Final Project consulting		
12/9	Final Project due by 5 pm		